The Church Member.

S. H. Dietzel, Ph. D.,

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE CHURCH MEMBER

AND

HIS VARIOUS RELATIONS AND DUTIES TO HIS HOME, HIS CHURCH, AND HIS STATE

BY

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HAGERSTOWN, MD.
GLOBE JOB ROOM PRINT.
1900.

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DEDICATION.

Without asking his permission, this little volume is most affectionately dedicated to the Rev. William H. Grob, the first Reformed minister of whom I have any recollections, and who gave me many kind words of advice and encouragement during the period of my life when I most needed them.

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PREFACE.

EVER since I began my humble ministry of love, I have felt the need of some little book, which might be placed in the hands of the church membership, which might bring home to them the various duties and responsibilities resting upon them, and thus aid in guiding and leading them to that brighter and better home in heaven.

Nothing, it is true, can take the place of the Word of God as a guide and rule for our faith and practice, yet, in my humble judgment, such a book as this can, with profit, find a place in a Christian's library.

Some of the subjects I have already

handled in public discourses, others I have thought over for a long time, and now give them to the reader, with the hope and prayer that they may be "seed sown on good ground."

I am conscious of the fact, that much remains to be said on each subject, but I give the result of my meditations to the public with the hope that it may lead many to "think on better things," and thus bring light and hope and joy into darkened hearts and homes.

I must confess that my ideal has not been reached, but if this little book will be the means of cheering some faint-hearted Christian traveler, thus enabling him to keep on in the true way; if it will help some parents to reach a higher conception of the sacred responsibility which is theirs; if it will enlighten some hearts; if it will make the arduous labors of my brethren in the ministry less burdensome

and more fruitful, then I will feel myself amply repaid for all the thought and prayers I have given to the several subjects. With this hope I launch it forth on the sea of life, and may God's blessing go with it.

S. H. D.,
Cavetown, Md.

March 20, 1900.

CHAPTER I.

THE DAY OF CONFIRMATION AND WHAT IS NOW EXPECTED OF YOU.

THIS is a solemn, a sacred day, and if you will be faithful to the vows you now have taken, the course, which you now have begun, will bring you a happy and peaceful life, growing more Christlike day by day, until, at last, when this weary life is ended, heaven will be your home for evermore.

There are, indeed, few if any scenes on earth more beautiful and impressive than a *Class* of young men and women surrounding the *Altar*, taking the confirmation vows, renouncing the world, the flesh and the devil, and promising to follow Jesus Christ all the days of their life. It is a

public confession before the world that they have turned away from the vain things of this life, with its empty bubbles, and have now resolved, henceforth, to live in and for Christ, God being their helper.

Whether or not you could be saved outside of the Church of Christ, I do not propose to discuss here. Let it be sufficient to know that Jesus thought it necessary to leave His throne in heaven and come down among us men to establish a *Church*, unto Himself, unto which He gave a mission and a work to do, and that "*they added daily such to the Church as should be saved*," God has made the Church an instrument, in His hands, for the dissemination of Christian knowlege, with the purpose in view of developing Christian character. It is a divine-human institution permeated by the Spirit of Jesus, its Founder, and the duty of the

Church is: to bring moral order out of chaos, to overcome evil with good, darkness with light and error by truth.

It is a divine-human institution established and perpetuated for our benefit; but it only gives us the means of grace and the helps and guidance necessary for our salvation which God for Christ's sake grants us, *not* by *merit, but* by *grace through faith are we saved.*

You *join* the Church then, in a manner; as you would join a school—for the purpose of receiving help and instruction; and as the school exists for the pupils, so does the Church exist for its members. It is only a help to our salvation. If we wish to learn we must do our part—must study—else the best schools in the land cannot give us an education. So you and I must do our part and use, or appropriate, the means of grace, else we can not be saved *in the Church.*

You become a member or pupil of a certain school, not because you know all that is taught there, but because you wish to learn what is taught there. In like manner you join the Church of Christ, you become a member, not because you are good, but because you have resolved to do good, and want all the *helps* that the Church can give you, because you wish to be obedient to the divine command. And here it is you find men and women of congenial spirits, encouraging and cheering and helping you to live a better and nobler life. "They that are whole need no physician."

And remember this fact, my reader; that the Church of Christ does not need you half so much as you need the sanctifying influence that pervades the sanctuary. The Church will stand and flourish whether or not you come within her sacred portals; she is founded on the

Rock, Jesus Christ, and the "gates of hell shall not prevail against her." But it is a sacred duty, which you owe to yourself, to unite with some Church and give your aid and influence for good. God has made you for something worthy, and, if you are unfaithful to your trust, you are unfaithful to yourself. But, I assume that you are a member of the Church of Christ. What now has the Church and the world a right to expect of you? It goes without argument, that faithfulness is one of the necessary essentials to success in any undertaking, and so, my dear friend, if you do not hope to make shipwreck of your faith, I enjoin faithfulness upon you in your Church relations by all means.

If you are unfaithful in your school life, if you neglect to prepare your lessons properly, if you try to pass by unfair means, be assured you will wrong no one

so much as yourself. You will be the loser in the end. You do yourself more harm than any other person. The same holds good in your relation with the Church. By your unfaithfulness, you may bring discredit upon the Church in the eyes of the world. But there are many, who are true and faithful, who will substantiate the high claims of the Church, and you alone will be the sufferer in the end.

Not all who attend school become educated, and not all who join the Church will be saved.

Connecting with the Church is only the beginning. Many more things must necessarily follow. Not all the grafts that are placed upon a tree will grow; unless they receive the life blood—the sap—of the tree they wither and die. So those who are engrafted into the Church of Christ will grow only when they ap-

propiate to themselves the grace offered by her means.

What, then, is necessary that you may live a true Christian life? You have now made a profession—a beginning. You will find sore trials and severe temptations before you. However, if, by the help and grace of God, you set your face like a flint toward the heavenly home "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith," from Whom cometh our help, you will come off more than conqueror. "Pray to the Father in secret and He shall reward thee openly." Do not forget to pray; for prayer is one of the essential weapons in Christian warfare. When our blessed Lord and Savior found it necessary to spend whole nights in prayer; and also taught His disciples that "whatsoever ye ask the Father in My name it shall be given unto you," and when holy men of all ages were

moved to resort to prayer as is indicated by the Psalms; Jacob wrestling in prayer, St. Paul ceasing not to pray both night and day for his spiritual children, much more is it necessary for us, poor Christians, to pray for strength, for guidance, and for wisdom, saying: "keep thou my way, O Lord!"

We see the saints of God mighty in prayer. Monica prays for years until her petitions were answered. So must we not fail to pray unceasingly, for it is promised, "ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you," and "the prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Then, my dear friend, do not neglect to ask the Father to lead and guide you, for, though the way may be dark now, in due time He will bring you into the clear sunlight of His plans and purposes.

God will do His part, but do not forget

that you also have an important part to perform in "working out your own salvation." "God only helps those who help themselves." You must, then, not only make your own wants and needs known, but you must also do all you can to better your condition and as far as possible avoid temptations.

Thus, my dear young reader, you see, there are duties and responsibilities which are obligatory upon you. If you want to live a Christian life—a Christ life—then you must do your part. Your former associates may yet be out in the world loving the vain and empty, as well as questionable pleasures of life more than the joys of the Christian, and, if such be the case, then you must abandon the old haunts and associates. You must turn away from them, for you can never hope to reform your life unless you quit ungodly associates and questionable

pleasures; you "can not serve two masters;" you must either serve God or Mammon, no middle ground is possible.

You must leave off the pleasures of sin. This may require a severe struggle, but it *must* be done to assure your sincerity and security. You must take a firm stand on the Rock, Jesus Christ. Follow Christ, He is the highest possible Model of true manhood. Read God's Word, and it "will make you wise unto salvation." Thus only can you become an intelligent Bible Christian, and by and by you will become so permeated and filled with *Christ thought* that you will unconsciously follow Jesus, and then it will be easier to do right than wrong.

But you must also show your love to God and His cause by attending and taking part in all the services in the sanctuary, if possible. These services are for your benefit. The minister

selects his themes with the end in view of instructing, inspiring, comforting and helping you. And you should allow nothing, unless it be sickness or death, to detain you at home, and thus cause you to miss the services which are for your soul's welfare. It is so easy to form careless or indifferent habits that we should guard against it. One service missed makes it easier to miss another and thus you become a "stay at home" before you are aware. There are many families with whom the question "who will go to Church today?" is never asked, for it is understood that all will go; with them it has become the rule of life to go up to the house of the Lord regularly. They would no more think of allowing the day to pass by without attending divine services than to do without eating. Let it be the rule of your life to be present in rain or shine, in heat or cold

and you will receive blessings for the day of need.

Attend and take part in all the services; be a *whole-hearted Christian.* Give your aid and influence for good wherever and whenever you can, for, remember, you learn by doing and you grow and gather strength by exercising your powers.

There may be times when matters are not as pleasant as you may wish to see them, but keep on faithfully, *bear* with the infirmities of others; remember, you too may be in error. Do all you can for the good of your fellowmen and for the glory of God.

And whatever else you do, do not be a fault-finder. They are the bane to any cause. The growlers are never workers and the workers have no time to be growlers. They see the failures and short comings in others, and seldom, if

ever, do anything worthy. They only make things unpleasant. They are the friction in the machinery. They trouble the smoothe waters. They see the mote in a brother's eye but not the beam in their own. These "are spots in your feasts of charity * * * Clouds they are without water carried about of winds, trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots."

My friends, if you have nothing good to say, seal your lips, for the minister and officers have all the cares they well can bear without hearing of your grievances. Never let your conduct be unbecoming. Nothing is ever gained by being revengeful. It has been the experience of pastors almost universally, that the fault-finders are not the pillars of the Church. They are the weak timbers which make the building insecure. They cool the religious fervor, and cause un-

pleasantries and sadness. Our prayer is: From all such "good Lord, deliver us."

Again, should members of the church have grieviances, do not allow these petty little differences to interfere with your church. If you and your neighbor, after coming together and praying God to enlighten you, can not agree, then the minister and his officers can not serve as arbiters, either. But first of all, I enjoin upon you St. Paul's advice: "As far as possible live peaceably with all men."

Ever since the little band of Christians, on the day of Pentacost, were organized into a church there have been two kinds of members:—those who *help* and those who *hinder*, those who bring sunshine and those who bring clouds, those who warm and those who chill, and you, my reader, belong to one of these classes.

God wants you to be a helper, He has placed you here, in this land of Gospel

light, and we have a right to expect you "to walk as children of light."

You have too much honor or self-respect to be a "*dead-head beating your way*" to heaven; you desire to travel respectably; then be a sincere and conscientious pilgrim traveling to the heavenly Jerusalem. Bring honor to your church. Contribute according to your ability for her support. You should have too much pride to leave others pay the bills while you receive the benefits of the church. It is morally wrong. It is unjust to the other members for you to contribute nothing toward her support while you squander, every year, many times more for the luxuries and unnecessaries of life.

If you are rich or poor, your honor and pride should compel you to give according to your ability. As a rule the greater part of the contributions come from the relatively poor. It is they who keep the

wheels of the Gospel Chariot oiled; others who come arrayed in purple and fine linen, driving a span in a fancy carriage, contribute less than some poor washer-women. But, thank God, there are but few guilty of such base conduct.

And, now, what shall we say, in reply, to those *outsiders* who claim they "are as good as some in he tchurch?" Their comparisons are always unjust. They compare the worst in the church with the best outside; we frankly admit, to the truth, that there may be some outside of the church as good, in conduct, as some who are in the church—there are some who are good by *nature*, it comes natural to them and requires no effort, but this does not establish anything against the church as an institution for good. If some members of the church are not what they ought to be, they might still be worse if they were away from the sancti-

fying influence of the church. The church has a restraining and elevating influence on every one of her members, and there are few persons that are not to some extent, morally and spiritually benefited by their union with church. The tendency of the church is not to make her members bad but good, and, if the good who are outside would enter they would be made still better. But, remember this, the church is not for the perfect, but it, primarily, exists for the purpose of developing a larger and truer life. It enables men to prepare for heavenly citizenship—and as some schools, however good their curriculum may be, fail in making scholars of some who register, so the Church of God can not help the man who will not help himself.

But who made you a judge of your fellowmen? Can you see into the heart and read the hidden motives? Are you

omniscient that you can sit in judgment on the members of the church? The church through her influence has done more good for the world than all other forces combined; in fact, she is the mother and pioneer of all benefits and blessings we enjoy today. Her influence is felt in every department of life and you have free speech because the "truth has made you free."

"Think gently of the erring one!
And let us not forget,
However darkly stained by sin.
He is our brother yet.

Heir of the same inheritance,
Child of the self-same God;
He hath but stumbled in the path
We have in weakness trod."

CHAPTER II.

THE CHRISTIAN SON OR DAUGHTER IN THE HOME.

My kind reader, if you are still in the home of your childhood and youth enjoying the love and care of a fond mother and the protection and counsel of a wise father, you are certainly a fortunate child. You still have the comforts and privileges of home which you can find nowhere else once the old home is broken up, and now, remember, too, that these comforts and privileges, of home, which you are enjoying bear with them grave responsibilities and sacred duties. Your rights are based on your duties and responsibilities. It is because you and I have obligations which we owe to our God and to our fellowmen

from which no one can release us, that we have rights and privileges from which no man shall rob us.

You are a member of your household, and all the blessings and privileges which you now enjoy have come to you through the wise management and weary toil of your parents, and those before them. You have been, to them, a source of care and anxiety. Many were the sleepless nights they spent watching over and caring for you during that critical period of your life—childhood. Their own comforts were disregarded for your sake. Their whole life has been spent for you, and if they are Christian parents, by the help of God, they did their best to bring you up in the fear and love of God, so that you might become a noble man or woman who would be a blessing in the home and a benefit to society, and the Church. Now it is with you. Will you be true and noble, and thus

bring joy and gladness to their hearts in old age or will you turn away from their counsel and be wicked, thus bringing premature gray hairs down to an early grave?

In the providence of God, children were intended to be a blessing to parents, but, at times, that which is intended for a blessing becomes a curse.

We witness the closing scene of Rachel's life. Her life is ebbing away in giving birth to her last child. She knew she must die, and with her last gasping breath says: We will call him *Benoni*, which is "son of my sorrow," but, after her death, Jacob, who loved his Rachel dearly, thought that, in a manner, the child would make up for the loss—it would be to him a comfort, companion and thus, in a degree, at least compensate for the great loss of the mother—and so he named the babe, Benjamin, which is "son of consola-

tion." Thus every child is, to his parents, either a Benoni or a Benjamin; either a "son of sorrow," or a "son of consolation." Which, by God's help, my young reader, will you be?

In the mysterious law of life, the link that unites God and the child is the parents. It has pleased God to place them over us and all we have and all we are now we owe to them.

The great Lincoln only expressed the sentiment of all true and worthy children when he said: "All I am or hope to be I owe to my angel mother; blessings on her memory. I remember her prayers, they have always followed me, they have clung to me all my life."

Most of the joy comes to fond parents in seeing and hearing of a child's noble conduct in life, and so, on the other hand, the greatest sorrow is to see a child go down the broad way that leads to certain ruin.

Every parent builds great hopes upon his child, and truly: "A wise son maketh a glad father but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." But why multiply quotations from the Word of God which is so rich and full of advice and admonition on the subject? It is a self-evident fact that a parent is either honored or dishonored by the child.

We have the sad and untimely end of Absalom—a promising young man who had all the privileges and opportunities of becoming a worthy son of a great father. His father, David, had built great hopes on him, but Absalom did not appreciate the privileges that were his. He became dissatisfied, and wickedly turned against his father and benefactor. which ended in the death of the rebellious son.

The parable of the Prodigal son leaving a good home, and a kind, loving father,

with all the comfort and conveniences, going out into the world and at last reduced to beggary, causing an aged parent sorrow and anguish untold, illustrates the conduct of many a child who does not realize the blessings of a good home until deprived of it.

Oh think of it, my young readers; think of what a debt of gratitude you owe to your father and mother! Think of their prayers and tears in your behalf and on account of your ungrateful conduct; and be true and honorable, as God meant you should be. Be kind and considerate for their welfare. Remember our Savior's conduct toward his weeping mother at the foot of the cross. Make your religion a practical thing! Your home should be better and happier, your walk and conversation more heavenly, and your parents more joyful because of your religion.

Be true to your home life. Never let

your conduct be the cause of sorrow to your fond parents.

"The old man eloquent," John Quincy Adams, said: "If I had no other inducement to live a true life, I would do so because of the joy it brings to my loving parents who spent their best days for me." What a noble son of noble parents! If every child in the land would entertain such lofty sentiments, we would, indeed, find few, if any, broken-hearted parents.

Yes, you may have had superior advantages for education; you may outclass your parents far in book learning, but remember, there are many, very many things which you can only learn as they learned them—by experience—and you will find when you reach their age that your opinions will also be greatly modified, because they have become matured with age and experience.

All great and good men have been obedient and dutiful sons in their home life. There they learned those lessons of industry, obedience, respect for others, in fact, all that goes to make a true and useful life.

Honor your parents, my young friends. Remember no one ever gets beyond honoring those who were to us a blessing. "The father of our country"—Washington—after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, when the war for Independence was over, returned to his beloved Mt. Vernon home. A large assemblage of his friends and countrymen had gathered at his old homestead awaiting his arrival. They waited long. Morning passed into midday and midday was drawing toward eventide, when amid deafening cheers we see him appear, but, he pays no attention to those about, he presses through the crowd to where his aged mother was

seated. He must first pay his respects to her. On being congratulated on her great son, the mother simply replied: "Yes, George always was an obedient child."

Oh, be an honor to your parents. God meant you should be a joy to them in their declining days. Regard and respect them for what they have done. Be a Benjamin, a "son of consolation," for "the father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy in him."

Remember, you will not always have your home as it is now. The time will come when, one by one, they must go, and if you now do your part faithfully in the home, you will have no cause for regret in after years when it is broken up.

May God be with you. May the spirit lead you so that your home may be better for your religion is our prayer.

"Do they miss me at home? Do they miss me?
'Twould be an assurance most dear,
To know at this moment some loved one
Was saying, 'I wish he was here.'
To feel that the group at the fireside
Were thinking of me as I roam!
Oh, yes! 'twould be joy beyond measure,
To know that they missed me at home."

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN PARENT AND HIS DUTY IN THE HOME.

We assume that we are writing to Christian parents who are teaching their children, both by precept and example, to become God-fearing men and women.

To become a parent is to assume the sacred and responsible task of the bringing up and training of an immortal being, for time and for eternity, for which God holds you responsible. We take it for granted that every thoughtful and considerate parent loves to see his children grow up to useful manhood or true womanhood, and hence, they go before them and set an example worthy of emulation. One of the saddest expres-

sions I ever heard—one which would cut the heart of any father to the quick—was uttered by a young man who with tears in his eyes said: "My father never gave me one single example worthy of imitation." Oh, fathers, let this never be said of you. Let not your sins rest upon posterity's head.

When a child comes to your home, it comes with these solemn words from your Heavenly Father: "Take this child and nurse it for me and I will pay thee thy wages." "Take *this* child and nurse it," that is, educate and bring it up in the way of true manhood or womanhood for me, that is for the Lord, and I, the Lord, will pay thee thy wages. These wages, or reward for faithfulness, come to you, parents, when you see your child do noble in life, for the parent is honored through and by the child. You are proud of a worthy son or daughter—you have a right to be—

they bring joy to your soul. This is the wages you receive for doing your duty by them. Remember, parents, no matter how brilliant an intellect your child may have, it must be fostered, developed and trained aright, else that which was intended as a blessing becomes a curse. No matter how religiously inclined your child may be, he needs a parent's example and encouragement. Bear in mind that the influence of home training is second to none other. All other forces combined cannot atone for neglected childhood in the homes of our land. The causes of crime are legion, but none weighs so heavily as neglected childhood.

The early impressions can never be eradicated. During the first seven or eight years of a child's life, the training has a greater power to mold the life and character, for weal or for woe, than the training of all subsequent time. Who of

us does not remember the friends, the home, and the incidents of the sunny days of childhood more clearly than any since? "Scratch the green rind of a young tree and it will leave an ugly scar forever." So is it with the first impressions on the young and tender mind of childhood.

The beautiful story of Cornelia is highly expressive. A haughty *noblewoman* displayed her own jewels and when done asked Cornelia: "And where are your jewels?" Cornelia, taking her into the adjoining room where lay sleeping her two baby boys, and pointing to them answered: "These are my jewels." So, my parents, every child, as it comes to your home, is a jewel in the rough, and God meant that you should, by wise care and training, remove the rough edges and polish the diamond.

Little do we know what future great man in the form of a helpless infant lies

in that old cradle of that humble rustic home. Little did Luther's mother dream as she fondled her boy, Martin, in that humble home of Eisleben, that she was bringing up a son whose stand for right and enslaved truth could not be put down by all the power of Pope Leo X.

Little did the mother of Zwingli think as she rocked her infant Ulrick beneath the snow-capped peaks in that Alpine village home that her boy would become the man who had the moral courage to oppose the Pope and take a stand in defense of liberty and justice and right.

Little did the mother of Henry imagine that her son Patrick, whom she fondled in the wilds of that Virginia home, would some day sound the tocsin of war which meant the liberation of the American colonies from the oppressive yoke of King George III. of England.

The early training of Moses could not

be eradicated by all the education that the Egyptian court school could give, and "he refused to be called the son of Pharoah's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

The Jesuit spoke wisely when he said: "Let me have the training of your child the first seven years of its life, and I do not care who will have it after that. It will be a Roman Catholic in reality if not in name."

John Quincy Adams, as well as President Nott, of Columbia College, both great and good men and intellectual giants of the first order, when old and feeble and merging into second childhood, would always repeat, on retiring, the little child prayer which their good mothers had taught their infant lips to prattle at the first dawning of the intellect. Remember then, parents, to begin early in the devel-

opment of the moral character of your child, and you will impress those lessons of piety and reverence which will be with them to the going down of life. The finest legacy you can leave your child is not bonds or houses or farms, but a good moral character, grounded in Jesus Christ, which will go with them beyond the grave.

Your child has higher wants and needs than those of the body. It is composed of body, soul, and spirit, and each of these appeals to you for help and care.

Your child is a social being and it needs companionship. It needs encouragement. It needs confidentials, and, parents, will you be your child's confidentials or will you ignore this craving in the child nature? Then be assured as it grows up it will make a confident of some companion outside of the family circle, which too often leads to ruin.

What a young man, growing up, needs more than anything else is a father's confidence and encouragment, and if parents have the true confidence of their children so that with frankness they will tell them all that is said and done, it will be one of the strongest safeguards about them.

The girl who makes a confident of her mother need never fear the advice she receives, for no one can be more unselfishly interested in her welfare than is mother.

One of the crying needs of our day is, closer intimacy and more implicit confidence between mothers and daughters, between fathers and sons. If the mother would make a close confident of her daughter from childhood, she would be placing about her the strongest safeguard against the *viper* who cares not what family he ruins nor what disgrace he brings upon pure womanhood. There are many, yea only too many, mothers

who spend any amount of money for the education of their daughters. They send them away to the best schools in the land. They have them educated in all the *higher* branches. They can sing and paint. They can quote French and Latin. They can recite whole plays of Shakespeare. They can sew and cook by rule, but these mothers have failed to make confidentials of their daughters. They have been "encumbered with many things" and thus "neglect that better part." In short, they have failed to impress, upon their minds and hearts and lives, the great and fundamental principles of true womanhood, and, consequently, as we too often see, they become easy victims to the snares of the oily-tongued flatterer whose sin-steeped soul is coated over by fine, genteel manners and smooth, persuasive language. Remember this, parents, your children must have confidentials in this

life—and they will have them—and one of the rules of human life is, that those in whom we place confidence will have an influence over us. Therefore, the great and momentous question is: Who are your children's confidentials? In other words, who is going to rule over them and influence their conduct? Your children *must* have confidence, sympathy, and instruction and have you, parents, proven yourself worthy of their confidence and respect? Have your actions been so as to make them realize that you are their most intimate friend and their most devoted sympathizer? You say: "I live for my child." Yes, I doubt it not in the least, but perhaps, because of lack of forethought or by being absorbed wholly in looking after their temporal wants, you may not have any time left to devote to their nobler impulses and your children who need sympathy and encouragement

become estranged more and more from father and mother as the years roll by and the gulf between parental confidence and child confidence grows wider and wider and in time they are more timid in telling their secrets to you than to any one else.

Oh, parents, I raise the voice of warning. It is your duty to gain and hold the confidence of your boy and of your girl in such a way that they will feel free in telling you all their secrets, and, when so, you will find that you have placed about them a mighty bulwark of safety. Show them that you are worthy of their confidence. Make your home an experience meeting, and you will have ideal sons and daughters, and your home will become, to them and you, the dearest place in all the world. The ideal home is where father, mother, and children are all confidentials; where the interest of one

is the interest of all the others; where one member of the family receives inspiration and encouragement and sympathy and love from all the rest; where all have confidence in, and love and respect for each other, so that they with freedom tell one another what they say and do in life; and, where Jesus is the Elder Brother whom they ask daily for wisdom and counsel to direct their doings and sayings. When parents have such a home they can rest assured their children are not likely to go astray and they need never blush on account of the conduct of sons or daughters.

Then, parents, do not spend all your time and energy in accumulating worldly goods. In short, do not worship Mammon, and neglect childhood, lest you will have cause to regret it.

What we want and need, for the hastening of the Millennium, is more

consecrated homes that will send forth into the world consecrated Christian men and women.

The family is the foundation upon which society, the church, and the nation rests. The family government is the center from which all other forms of government radiate—noble families make a noble nation. If the home government of any land could be ideal, then as a natural sequence our state and national government would be ideal likewise.

From our homes of today will come the men and women of tomorrow, in whose hands will be the care and perpetuation of our free institutions, and how well they will perform their duties then depends on how well the parents do their part in the homes now.

How wise as well as witty was the reply of the old scholar and poet, John Trebonius, Luther's old teacher, who being

asked why he always took off his cap and made a bow to his pupils on entering his school room, replied: "I make my bow to the great men of the next generation who sit before me, in jackets, on those rustic benches." Just so, my friends, with the great men of the next generation who are now receiving or failing to receive the proper training in our homes and in our schools—secular as well as Sunday—through which they come up to the world and Church of Christ. It needs no prophet's eye to see that the destiny of the Church of Christ and of our nation depends on the proper training of the American youth.

That "the boy is father of the man" is amply illustrated in modern biography, but withal, under the providence of God, every child needs the guidance and direction and prayers of wise Christian parents.

It is always an advantage to be de-

scended from pious parents. To have enjoyed the guidance and example of a Christian father and the love and prayers of a Christian mother is the greatest blessing which we could wish to any child. To be brought up in a home pervaded by a godly atmosphere is a blessing which only those who know can appreciate.

In so many of our families the father himself is not a member of the church, and in many cases he is indifferent, yea worse than indifferent. The mother of that family may be a godly woman and do all she can, but when she does not have the husband and father's influence she finds her burden a heavy one, but by God's help she shall succeed, for "our labor in the Lord is not in vain," and as good is more powerful than evil, as light is more powerful than darkness, and as God is more mighty than the evil one, so the good influence of a Christian

mother will often triumph over the bad example of a father. The blessings coming from a good Christian mother can never be over-estimated. Monica, the pious mother of St. Augustine, prayed earnestly for years that her son might not follow his father's footsteps, and, at last, her prayer was answered and her son won to Christ and Christianity, and he became one of the *defenders of the faith* and one of the most celebrated church fathers. Some one has said: "As a rule where there is a Monica in the home there will be a St. Augustine in the cradle, and where there is a Eunice teaching the child the Scriptures, there will be a Timothy to teach the Gospel to the rest of mankind."

The most illustrious statesmen, the most distinguished warriors, the most eloquent ministers, and the greatest benefactors of mankind owe their greatness to the fostering influence of good homes.

The family lays the foundation of church membership. If every child in the land had the training of a godly mother and pious grandmother like Timothy, who at his mother's knee learned those beautiful Bible stories which "made him wise unto salvation," we would have more consecrated men in the Church of Christ. That home training was not a matter for the future with his mother, it was not left until he would reach the years of discretion, it was not deferred until he could enter the synagogue and learn it from others, but so well and so thoroughly was it done by Eunice and Lois and so far-reaching was its influence that Paul considers it worthy of a place in his farewell epistle—his second Epistle to Timothy.

No, my dear readers, there is nothing that can atone for neglected home training. It is either an efficient agent of God

for the salvation of souls or a powerful emissary of Satan for the destruction of character.

Lord Shaftsbury said: "Give me a generation of mothers like Sarah, Hannah, Lois, Eunice, Monica, and Cornelia, and a host of others less known, and I will undertake to change the whole world in a few years." What we need, then, are more consecrated homes in which childhood is dedicated to and educated in the love and faith of the God of Hannoh, Lois, Eunice, and Monica.

It is, indeed, sad to think that in so many Christian homes the family altar is broken down, and those beautiful Bible stories which we learned at our mother's knee are too often replaced by transient literature—we are living in an age of light literature and it is producing a *light* people. The people need St. Paul's advice, today more than ever, about "hav-

ing ears itching after new things," and in the name of God, and for the permanence and stability of society, we raise the voice of warning to parents, today. Oh, neglect not the old family Bible—the Book of your fathers and mothers which will make your children "wise unto salvation." During those long winter evenings gather your family about you, and tell them those beautiful Bible stories which they will never forget so long as memory retains and discharges its happy function. Think, what can be more interesting to your child, if you wish only to entertain, but withal what can be more profitable for the life to come than the beautiful and touching story of Joseph with his coat of many colors; his treatment by his brethren; his ruling during the famine, and his generous forgiveness and reconciliation, at last, with his brethren. The story of Cain and Abel; of the

child Samuel; of the shepherd boy David; of Isaac and Rebecca; of Ishmael and Hagar; of Esther and Mordacai; of Jonah; of Ruth and Naomi; of Job and his trials; of the three Hebrew boys in the furnace; of Daniel in the lion's den —yea, of the many beautiful and edifying stories in the Old Testament, and then the New so full of God's love in the gift of His Son, our Savior; of Simeon and Anna; of the family at Bethany; yea, of all the facts and incidents associated with Jesus from the lowly manger cradle to the rock-ribbed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and then the thrilling life of Paul, and the other Apostles, on down to the Beatific Vision of John on the rocky and storm-beaten Isle of Patmos. You can rest assured if you impress those beautiful lessons of God's goodness, love and mercy upon the mind of your child, in early life; the Bible will become, to him, a blessed inheritance.

Then in the interest of his eternal soul, I plead with you, parents, awaken in the mind of your child a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and "when he is old he will not depart from it."

Regard the spiritual training of your child not lightly or the voice of neglected childhood, like Abel's blood, "will cry out against you from the ground." Use the old family Bible more as a Book which is to make you and yours "wise unto salvation." Let not the dust of ages gather upon its precious lids; use it for something more than a mere ornament on your center table. It is the message of the Father from heaven. It is the light which will dispell the darkness and gloom of sin, and it will bring you joy and peace as you near the evening of life. It is suitable for the palace of the rich and for the hovel of the poor. It enlightens us that we may live aright here

and it gives us hope when these earthly scenes shall change by the promise of a home with loved ones "lost awhile," but then no more tears and separation. It is the guardian of childhood, the champion of woman's rights, the comfort of the sick, and the consolation of the dying. Oh, use this precious Book and teach your child to honor and respect its precious precepts. In short, let it be, to you and yours, a guide to the home prepared for the saints beyond. Give your child something which will soothe his sorrows, calm his fears, strengthen his faith, and inspire his hope—something which will throw around the grave of loved and cherished dead the light and promise of a reunion in heaven.

For the sake of your child emulate the zeal and example of Lois and Eunice; in the early morning of life sow the seeds and God will give the increase, and at

last—for there will be a last for all of us —when life's labors are done, you shall all meet again around the great white throne to part no more forever.

"Lead, Kindly Light amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on:
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on,
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN SHOULD A CHILD JOIN THE CHURCH AND WHAT THE PARENTS' DUTY IS IN HELPING THE CHILD TO DECIDE.

We assume, as a natural sequence, that you, as Christian parents, wish your child to unite with the church of Jesus Christ, for we cannot make ourselves believe that you, who are members of the church, could think of anything else. You have, both by precept and example, impressed upon his mind the duty as well as the blessed privilege of being a communicant member of the company of believers journeying toward the heavenly Jerusalem. Your child is growing up about you, and are you, true to the vows taken at his

baptism, doing your part to see that at the proper age he is instructed in the way of the Lord and will become a member of the household of faith? The question, naturally, follows: At what age should your child join the church? Here, no doubt, some will differ with me, for I believe in having them unite earlier than many of the parents, in some sections of our church, think they should, and I believe that sacred Scripture as well as experience will bear me out in this asser tion. You say: I do not believe in having a child join before he knows what he is doing. Here, of course, we agree, but we may differ as to the age in which your child reaches conscious moral responsibility—some children reach that period at a comparatively early age—or, may be, you decide to allow your child to grow up and choose for himself, and the result is he grows up and does not choose

at all. If so, my friend, you are responsible to God and must answer for a neglect of your sacred duty toward your child.

Do you not think it better, not to say safer, that your boy should grow up inside than outside of the church? Do you not think it far better and wiser that he should form correct habits in early life, than to "sow wild oats" for a season, and then break away from his indifferent or sinful habits and companions? You have an influence over your boy until he reaches a certain age, and then he is beyond your control in many matters. There is danger in your delaying in this matter until he reaches a more mature age. There was a time, a generation or two past, when it was safe to wait to confirm the boys until they were grown up, but that day is past, for, in our age, the boys become *men* much sooner than they used to and are beyond the parents' control in a short time.

Remember this, fathers and mothers, to begin with Christ early means to begin life well, for what springtime is, in nature, that youth is in the life of man, and a wasted youth like a wasted springtime will leave its baneful and barren effects in the summer and autumn of life. When the fruit trees are hurt by the frosts in springtime, they never again, during all that season, recover completely. Every period of life has its lessons to be learned and its duties to be performed and, therefore, if you hope that your child may do his whole duty, as a man, you must see to it now that he make the proper use of childhood and youth—the periods of preparation.

Early in Christ means a longer time for Christian development, and thus you may hope for a more mature Christian character. We learn by doing, and we grow and develop by exercising our powers. As a

rule, the world owes but little to those who began at the eleventh hour.

Again, when we read God's word, we find that it is full of rich promises to youth. "Remember, now, thy Creator, in the days of thy youth," etc. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." These and many similar passages show us the special commands of the Lord to youth with its peculiar advantages and dangers. God forbid that they should live a life of sin in youth with the hope of living a life of holiness in old age. The sins of youth will leave their baneful effects which all subsequent life cannot eradicate. May it not be said: "His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust."

No, my dear reader, it is dangerous to delay until later life. You can rest assured on the testimony of the aged saints near the sunset of life, and you will find that none of those, who in their early days consecrated their life and service to Christ, ever in after years regretted having done so. Their chief joy and consolation, in their declining days, was the sweet satisfaction of having spent their days in the service of the Master Whom they soon shall meet in the heavenly home.

Read God's word, relating to the Jewish church, and you will find that according to Jewish tradition the age of twelve was a very important period in a boy's life. At the age of twelve the Jewish lad was expected to join with the elders in religious duties. At the age of twelve Moses left Pharoah's court, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a

season." At the age of twelve, Joshua dreamed of his great life work. At the age of twelve, Samuel heard the call of God while serving the aged Eli. At the age of twelve, Solomon judged between the contending women and restored to the sorrowing mother her true child.

The age of twelve was a turning point, a deciding period, a crisis, in the life of every Jewish lad—then he became a "Son of the Law" and was considered morally responsible for his words and deeds.

At the age of twelve we see Jesus, with His parents, going up to Jerusalem to attend the Temple service, and He is found among the doctors asking questions which puzzled the most profound. Here we have ideal parents, at the temple service and their Boy is with them, and here they dedicate Him to the Lord. How beautiful a sight it is to see parents and children come up to the house of the Lord together!

The child Jesus was brought, He was not sent, nor was He left to choose for Himself or not to choose at all, as so many do. Joseph and Mary did not wait until He was old enough to know what He was doing or why He joined the caravan on that long pilgrimage. They knew that a father and mother could reach their boy, in his younger days, while, so often, in a few more years he would be beyond their control. They knew that a boy learns of things sacred by doing sacred things, and, they realized, that it was better and safer for Him to grow up inside of the church than outside. In our day too many fathers and mothers allow their boy to grow up outside of the church of Christ, where he will certainly not grow better, but the chances are the direct opposite—they expect him to join later, but their expectations too often are not realized. There is something radically wrong in much of our

so-called home training, else we would not see so many grown up sons and daughters out of the church when father and mother both belong. Oh, parents, I plead with you, do not neglect this important duty! It is one which, as parents, you cannot delegate to your pastor nor to any other person living. This is a personal duty which rests with *you* and for which God holds *you* responsible.

My dear reader, if you stop and think how you plan and help your boy to decide in temporal matter, you will see the wisdom of my strong appeal in helping him to start aright on the way that leads to eternal life. You use good judgment and common sense in directing your boy's intellectual education. You do not wait to have him admitted to school until he is old enough to know why he is going. No, if you did, too many precious years would be wasted and he would see it only

when too late. The idea of the church is a spiritual home in which we may develop Christian character—Christian life—and we join it not because we are good, but because we are striving to do better, and here we find helps and the means of grace to assist us. Then, do not wait until your child knows everything, else he will never come. Every year of waiting makes it more difficult to decide, for his ways and habits in life become more fixed and the world will have made a greater impress upon his character. The younger he decides for Christ the easier and the safer in the end it will be. We learn, from the Holy Record, that so soon as Jesus was old enough to join public worship, His parents took Him to the Temple. It was not enough that they set Him a good example, but they proposed to bring Him up in the right way. They knew, that whatever a child ought to do, that

brought, to the parents, the sacred responsibility of seeing that it is done. If He likes to do it, so much the better, and if He does not like to do it, so much the more need is there that the parents should urge Him to do it. Yes, even the Child Jesus needed the worship in the sanctuary, and the training and devotion which went with it. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom" * * * "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." How sad, it is, to think, that so very many parents neglect their duty toward their children in bringing them into the fold of Christ. I know of a mother, herself a communicant member of the church, who was broached, by her pastor, on the subject of her daughter, then a young lady of seventeen, uniting with the church, and, in her daughter's presence, she replied: "It is

all right to me, just as she decides." My friends, no argument is necessary to see, that here was a lack of home influence. The mother could give her daughter advice on all other subjects, but the *one* relating to her eternal salvation was left to the whims and fancies of the daughter. Thus many parents neglect their duty toward their child for years and at last they awaken to the fact and then want the pastor to speak with the son or daughter. But, remember, your pastor can not atone for your negligence; he is willing to do all he can, but if your child has gone astray through you neglecting your duty all these years, the pastor is not likely able to reach him.

See to it, then, parents, that your child is brought to the house of God, early in life, and his desire will be; "to be with the people of God." Here he will receive the help and grace of God; here he will

enjoy the benefits and blessings which shall come to all the faithful—"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." See to it then that your child becomes a member of the church of Christ, and, until he is here, your full duty, as a parent, is not discharged, no matter what else you may have done for him. May God help you to be faithful in this important and ofttimes difficult task is our prayer.

"Oh, talk to me of heaven! I love
To hear about my home above;
For there doth many a loved one dwell
In light and joy ineffable.

O! tell me how they shine and sing,
While every harp rings echoing,
And every glad and tearless eye
Beams like the bright sun gloriously.

Tell me of that victorious palm,
Each hand in glory beareth:
Tell me of that celestial calm,
Each face in glory weareth!"

CHAPTER V.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL—WHAT IS IT? AND OUR DUTY TO IT.

One of the last commands of our blessed Lord to the restored Apostle Peter, was: "Feed my lambs"—that is: Be a shepherd over the tender lambs of the flock. Lead them by the "still waters" and in the "green pastures."

The lambs of the flock are those who have come, lately, into the *fold*, and they need special care and oversight—this most important charge I commit into your hands.

This same charge comes to the church today, of which you, my reader, I assume, are a member who is interested in the cause and work of the Master, hence it

comes to you with equally as much force as it did to the Apostle almost nineteen hundred years ago.

Our blessed Lord saw what has been the experience of the church ever since His time, viz: That the success of the Gospel of Christ among any people depends to a great extent upon the care and training which is given to the *lambs* of the flock. The hope of the church in heathen lands is in winning the lambs of the flock, who will be the future men and women, to Christ.

The world at large for time immemorable has been heeding this command of the Lord even before the time of Christ, and in the degree that the people have been faithful to this charge to that extent have they prospered.

While it is generally conceded that the Sunday school, as an agency for popular religious instruction, had its origin in the

work of Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, England, in the year of our Lord, 1780, yet it was by no means the beginning of that method of popular instruction which it has come to represent in the plans of the Christian church of today. We are told: "Even in Abraham's time he had 318 instructors who taught his people's children the law of God, and, under the Mosaic law, the children as well as the parents were commanded to be gathered before the Lord for the study of the *Law*, in order that they might supplement any lack in their home instructions in religious knowledge, and a very important feature of the Synagogue service, after their return from the Babylonian captivity was the study of the Law by free questioning and answering.

While, in connection with the Synagogue, a system of religious schools was organized in the first century before Christ,

and every Jewish child, from five to seven years of age, was obliged to be in the synagogue Bible school and pass from one grade of study to another until he reached full manhood. These schools existed the time of our Lord's earthly life and He attended one of them and in them He taught as He went from place to place.

We find the same in the Apostlic church and it was only when the ecclesiastical spirit overcame the evangelical that the teaching of the Bible to the young was put aside, and many able historians attribute this as the cause of the decline of learning, and the "dark ages" as the natural result. At any rate, when the Rennaissance and the great Reformation swept over the continent and beyond the seas, we find all the Reformers preparing catechisms and again we see special stress laid on the training of the child

and youth, and we hear the bold Saxon, Luther, say: "The children are the seed and source of the church and for the church's sake Christian schools must be established and maintained, for God maintains the church through the schools." But again, in time, the polemic spirit led to the overshadowing of teaching by preaching and the child's religious instruction was confined to a desultory reciting of the catechism, and later by some church bodies entirely neglected, and as a natural consequence there was again a sad decline in the religious life during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which gave rise to free thinking and agnosticism, both in the colonies and in the continent beyond the Atlantic; but following the great religious revival, during the middle of the eighteenth century, came the modern Sunday school which has, since then, been the main agency for

popular religious instruction. True, its beginning was unsatisfactory. There was a lack of unity and system in Bible study. And it required almost another century of evolution when in 1873 Mr. B. F. Jacobs submitted a uniform system of Bible studies which covers the salient points and dwells upon the underlying principles of the Old and New Testaments in periods of seven years, making three series or the whole cycle covering the principal parts in 21 years. Thus the whole English speaking world has a uniform series of lessons and the publication houses feel justified in preparing *helps* for the lessons in which they employ the ripest scholars and the most profound thinkers who give us wise interpretations that lead us on to that greater light—Christ Jesus.

These lessons may not be what all or some would desire, and there is still a wide margin for improvement, but in

comparison with former times we are living in an age of great and glorious privileges, and as naturally follows, the greater the opportunity the greater the responsibility, hence the command, "feed my lambs," comes to us, living in this closing year of the century, with redoubled force.

As the church advances she is awakening to a fuller sense of her duty toward the lambs of the flock and the signs of the times warn us to "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Every age, of the church, has her battles to fight and her principles to defend and we must needs "put on the whole armor of God" for the warfare must not only be defensive but also offensive; we must "go up and take the land" for the Lord, and it is our prerogative to use all legitimate means at hand.

The opposition to the Sunday schools has long since ceased, and all admit to-

day that it has its place, and an important place, it is, as an instrument in God's hand for the dissemination of Christian knowledge and the regeneration of the world. But it is a supplementary institution designed principally to compensate in a manner or make up for deficient and neglected home training. If all parents would do their whole duty in the religious training of childhood and youth the Sunday school would not be a necessity as it is under existing circumstances.

Whenever a child comes to a home God says: "Take this child * * * and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages," Exodus, 2: 9. But alas, too many of our so-called parents are worse than indifferent to all that is high and holy, and the child receives no *nursing*—training—and this deficiency must be supplied or made up as near as possible in some other way. To such children the

Sunday school comes with its benign influence and tries to lead the unfolding intellect to a knowledge of divine things that the young heart and mind may have a higher view of a true life.

It goes without saying, that there is nothing—no Sunday school nor any other training—which can take the place of home training, but, under existing circumstances, the homes must be supplemented by something which the Sunday school affords. Too many of our homes are hot beds of vice in which the tender buds of promise are growing up surrounded by a poisonous moral atmosphere and the church through the Sunday school has lengthened her cords and tries to reach the child and develop, in him, a sense of moral responsibility.

The churches and the public schools of our land have grave issues to meet, or rather to counteract, which if not

righted are sure to cause moral ruin in the end and the name of our posterity will be "Ichabod"—"departed glory." The laws of our land are for the purpose of defending the weak and innocent and to punish the guilty; while the church and the schools are aiming to prevent crime, and "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." But, despite the efforts put forth, we find pauperism and vagrancy, vice and crime increasing at an alarmingly rapid rate. Environment, heredity, drink, and neglected home training all contribute their quota to this sad state of affairs. All this host of degraded humanity have had their training, or rather lack of training, in some homes. There is something radically wrong in much of our so-called home life. Ease, luxury, and present pleasure seem to be the highest ambition of far too many in our day. Some parents seem to think

that if they provide for the temporal wants of their children then their whole duty is done, but, my friends, there is a deeper law written on our very being which must be recognized or ruin is sure to follow.

If society hopes to maintain its purity and integrity it must have honest, intelligent, God-fearing men and women, and as these virtues are not the natural growth in some homes they must be developed outside and transplanted.

The state uses its authority and thus reaches out its long, strong arm of law and lays it upon your child, saying: This will be one of our future men and I will look after him. I will give him an education so that he will become an intelligent citizen, able to discharge the duties of citizenship intelligently and honorably. Thus the state establishes schools and maintains them for the good

of her future citizens and in some cases has compulsionary laws, making it obligatory, on the part of parents, to do their duty with their child, and by taxation—which is nothing else than forced charity—each property owner helps to educate our future men and women. The state wants and needs honest, industrious citizens who can intelligently, and who will faithfully discharge their duties, and hence it has its laws protecting its future men and women. But back of this public spirit for the good of its citizens there is a deeper law—the law of benevolence—because the churches have moulded and shaped public opinion and taught the world the great "*Golden Rule*" and the underlying principles of the "*Sermon on the Mount.*"

The religion of Jesus Christ has ever had the best interest of humanity at heart. It is *altruistic* in the fullest sense of the

term. It has fostered intelligence, honesty, and industry. Our forefathers, coming to the wilds of America, built the church and schoolhouse side by side. The church has ever recognized her sacred duty of looking after the lambs of the flock, and in earlier days the good old Bible was the text book, in our schools, when those beautiful Scripture lessons and Bible stories were impressed indelibly upon the young and tender minds and these greatly helped to shape and mould their lives for *true* greatness. Yes, the Bible has ever been the friend of learning as well as the champion of men's rights.

The one object of the Sunday school, today, is to make Bible scholars, of those, who learn it not in their homes, for the purpose of making true, worthy citizens for the great commonwealth of Israel.

The Sunday school is the handmaid of

the home and church, and though it is of human origin, yet God has set his stamp of approval upon it without the shadow of a doubt; and if the church is to be the *Pool* of *Saloam* where the leprous sinner may find healing remedies, she must direct her force to the fountain of immortal youth. If the young life—the fountain—is pure, then the stream is more likely to remain untarnished.

The future hope of the church rests upon the shoulders of the boys and girls who are now coming up through the Sunday school. Neglect the training of the young and the church will surely follow in the downward wake. The fathers and mothers of today will soon sleep with their forefathers in the village graveyard and the boys and girls must be ready to take their places in the church, or its glory will depart.

The strength of the church lies not so

much in numbers nor in the wealth of her members as in the consecrated men and women, and the church of the future needs Bible Christians full of the love of the crucified and risen Savior, and burning with zeal for His cause. The church needs Christians who can give a "reason for the hope" that is in them. The plans and purpose of the Sunday school is to instruct the children and youth in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures in order that its precious precepts may shape and mould their conduct, thus inspiring them to live aright here and at last enter into that "rest which remaineth for the people of God."

The early impressions can never be eradicated. They will last until time shall be no more; and scarce a ray of heavenly light ever penetrates the minds of many of the rising generations save as it comes through the Sunday school. Many an one

is thus led into the church of Christ through the influence of the Sunday school.

A grave and solemn task is ours and may we awaken to the opportunity and duty that lies before us. God meant that we should give our aid and co-operation by our presence, and in helping to gather neglected childhood not only from the "highways and hedges," but also from the high places and byways.

It is our duty to do all we can to bring our fellow men of all ranks and conditions to a saving knowledge of Christ. Thus we can help to save the souls of those who are in need of help but do not know it. God meant that we, as professed followers of Jesus Christ, should be interested in everything that will advance and perpetuate the welfare of our fellow men and the spread of God's kingdom, and our interest *must* manifest itself in a prac-

tical and tangible form. We can only save our own souls by helping to save others, that is Christ's law of Christianity.

We are aiming not only to prepare the lambs of the flock for good citizenship here, but also for the heavenly country. We are building to last after we are sleeping in our graves. We are laboring for the peace and prosperity of Zion, and unless the world is a better, a happier, and a nobler place for our having been in it we have been unfaithful to our life trust and our life is worse than wasted.

Then, my friends, let us do our part faithfully in life's great conflict. Each one of us has some influence for good and may we use it aright, may some hearts be happier and better because they have known us. Here we have a golden opportunity to use our influence. Let us be up and doing "while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work."

And by and by each one must give an account for the opportunities he has had to do good.

Let the members of the church of Christ measure up to a full sense of their various duties and the world will be won for Christ. Let each one do his duty in "feeding the lambs," and especially have we a right to expect to find the *officers* at their places giving their example, their help and influence to this important branch of church work.

Pray to the Father for light and guidance as you journey over unfamiliar or difficult paths. Do your whole duty faithfully, for, in caring for the "lambs of the flock, you are caring for the best interest of Christ's kingdom, as well as for the best interest of your community and land, for whatever will bring us to a better knowledge of God and His will, will also make us better citizens.

Go forward, then, in your noble work. You can give no valid excuse, nor will you ask one, if you are full of the love of God and for perishing souls, and by doing good to others you will do good to self, for good is reflexive. Be true to your fellowmen and the reward is sure to come for "our labor in the Lord is not in vain."

"No word falls fruitless; none can tell
How vast its power may be,
Nor what results enfolded dwell
Within it silently.

Work and despair not; give thy mite,
Nor care how small it be;
God is with all that serve the right,
The holy, true, and free!"

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT AND CHRISTIAN WORK.

Christianity is not only a belief or a profession, but it is a *life*, and as it is the province or nature of all life to develop from a less perfect to a more perfect stage so do we look for, and have a right to expect, a growth in Christian life and character. We are to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" as we grow in years.

Paul writing to the Philippian brethren says: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the

mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." What Paul here meant, in a few words, was: I have not yet, by any means, reached the highest stage of Christian character or development, I am not satisfied with what I have done nor with my experience in the past, for there is yet much before me and I must press forward to attain it. With Paul it was ever forward and onward toward a better and nobler life. His spiritual attainments developed spiritual capacities; for him this life was not a finished period, but merely a period of preparation and he must press on from one stage to another, step by step, to higher and larger attainments. So with you and me, our work lies before and not behind us. The motto of the disciple of Christ is: Ever forward to duty, to nobleness.

"Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armor down,
The arduous work will not be done,
'Till thou obtain thy crown."

Thus, the duty of the child of God is to go forward "overcoming evil with good," advancing and conquering to conquer.

Use your spiritual powers; expand your life, your manhood, and your usefulness to a larger degree than ever attained before.

Do not sit, with folded hands, gazing upon the past and satisfied with what you have done in days that have gone by. Your life's work is not finished else God would take you out of this world. God has spared you all these years for something, therefore do not be satisfied with what you have done in the past. If you were true and faithful, in the long ago, you then only did your duty, and, if now you are resting your hope on that, I fear,

you will be sadly disappointed, at the close of life.

God has given you long days for a purpose; to cheer hearts and homes darkened by sin and sorrow, to lighten the burdens of others, and to encourage and cheer the weak and faltering, in short, to make the world better and happier and larger for your being in it. Today you are better prepared to do a noble work than ever before, because these years have brought to you experience, matured judgment, and Christian growth, and, unless, you are incapacitated by infirmities you are not excusable for your inactivity.

The trouble is, so many church members gauge their Christian duty by what some other poor, weak, unfaithful member has done, and, thus, by gauging by a false standard, they come far short of their whole duty.

Have you, my friend, done your part in

bearing the burdens of the Lord's work? or are you, in your mind, too old to be actively engaged in the Master's vineyard? Let us reason a little; can you still attend to your own business affairs or must some one be a guardian over you? Can you still be up and about during the week days in time to do a day's labor? If so then you are not as near, or wholly, incapacitated, for the Lord's work as you imagined.

If ever the time comes that your heart is in the Lord's work as in your secular affairs, then you will find it a pleasure to do the Lord's bidding and not seek refuge behind shallow or make-believe excuses.

Paul writing to the Christians in Galatia says: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" then he continues, "and let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if

we faint not." It is not wrong to grow weary *in* well doing, but it is wrong to grow weary *of* well doing. The self-sacrificing patriots, those Revolutionary war forefathers, who wrote our Nation's liberty with their own blood, often grew weary *in* their struggles for the cause of liberty, but they had such firm faith in its results that they never grew weary *of* the cause of liberty, and finally their earnest efforts were rewarded and we see them plant the flag of *freedom*—the stars and the stripes—our National emblem, in every hamlet, along every coast, and upon every hill-top in our land.

Yea, often were those self-sacrificing patriots discouraged and almost disheartened; often were they weak and footsore leaving their bloody footprints on the frozen ground. In their wilderness homes they left loving wives and helpless children, in hunger and want,

and their hearts grew home-sick for the little family circle. Yea, they suffered hardship and anguish untold—often weary *in* well doing but never weary *of* well doing.

The same may be said of every worthy enterprise and cause which has brought us blessings, opportunities, and privileges. Every privilege and blessing we enjoy has cost some one labor, anxiety, and sacrifice. So we, as members of the church of Christ, have a glorious cause to defend and perpetuate, and hand down, untarnished and undiminished, to our posterity. Let us be true to the privileges and opportunities entrusted in our hands. Go forward to victory! Be true to the cause you espouse. Rally about the Standard-bearer, Jesus the Christ, and He will inspire you with a new life and with holy zeal! Be a whole-hearted Christian. "Walk as children of light." Do not be in the church

merely for "the loaves and fishes." Do not use the *livery* of heaven for filthy lucre. "Consecrate yourselves, this day, to the Lord, that He may bestow upon you a blessing."

Do not be afraid you are doing too much for the church of Christ. You can never repay her for what she has done for you—in this life all the blessings of education, civilization, etc., owe their fostering care to the church as a mother. If you are blest with great intellectual ability, thank God that you have it, and can use it for His cause—opportunities bring to us responsibilities. If you have financial ability, thank God that He has counted you worthy to be a steward, and then give what is due Him. If others, who have as much or perhaps more of this world's goods, give a mere pittance to the Lord, I pray you, do not gauge your liberality by theirs. Theirs is a false standard, and

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they, failing to do their duty, will not justify you in failing to do yours.

You love to sacrifice for those whom you love. You are willing to sacrifice in order that you may contribute to a cause that lies near to your heart. So, if you have the true love for Christ and His cause, it will be a pleasure to contribute for its support.

On the other hand, if you withhold that which belongs to the Lord, your soul will grow smaller and the Christ love is in danger of dying within you. Study the demands of the church. Have an intelligent understanding of her needs, and you will want to give. It is a hopeful sign when great demands are made upon us, it reveals the fact that the Kingdom is growing. Oh, be honest in giving the Lord what is due Him from you as stewards! Remember, a cheap religion makes cheap Christians. Then develop the spirit

of liberality for the Lord's cause and you will develop a larger Christian life. You always have money for the things you love best. Pray God to enable you to love His Kingdom in a more tangible form, that you may labor for the peace and prosperity of Zion, for the widening of her borders. What we need for the evangelization of the world is, not so much more church members as better ones filled with the love of God's cause. Therefore "make full proof of your ministry of reconciliation." Use the means of grace. "Be diligent in season and out of season." "Quit yourselves like men, be strong." In fact, so live that with Paul you can say: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men," and then you will grow more Christ-like day by day until, at last, you shall be able to say: "For I am now ready to be

offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

We are weak, but Thou art mighty,
Help us then, oh Lord, we pray!
Take us by Thy hand and lead us
As we wander day by day.

Help us, in our lonely journey,
Day by day on Thee rely;
Help us when the storms do gather,
Help, oh help us, Lord! we cry.

And, at last, when *Death* shall claim us,
Take us home to Thee, we pray,
To the home of many mansions,
To the home of endless day.

Where a happy welcome waits us
From the loved ones gone before,
There to dwell, in bliss, with Jesus
And our friends forever more.

January, 1900. S. H. D.

CHAPTER VII.

YOUR MINISTER, AND HOW YOU CAN ASSIST AND ENCOURAGE HIM.

There is no one more conscious of the solemn responsibility which the sacred office, of the ministry, bears with it than the minister himself. He has spent the best part of his youth and young manhood in preparing himself for the sacred office. He has studied books and men, and he sees the sad havoc that sin has wrought upon the human race. He sees what God sacrificed for the salvation of the race. He loves souls, else he would not stand at the *sacred desk*. He comes to you, as the servant of God, to encourage and guide you in doing the Lord's will upon earth as it is done in heaven; his

education and training have all been with that end in view.

By the help and grace of God he tries ; to comfort the bereft, to encourage the weak and faltering, to warn the careless and indifferent, and to awaken in them a sense of duty to God and fellow man. To what extent his ministry, in your midst, will be a success depends as much upon you—your prayers and co-operation—as upon his own zeal and fitness. You must not expect to sit down, with folded hands, and have him to do everything. He comes to you, as the servant of the Most High, with God's authority and promises, but, he needs your assistance also. He is human, and, in the onerous duties of his sacred office and in his "zeal for good works," there are times when the dark shadows will fall upon his pathway, and he passes under the cloud or through deep waters and then he needs human, as well as divine, encouragement.

Your best interests and welfare are ever near to his heart and he tries to "preach Christ and Him crucified" for your comfort and edification. But he cannot preach to empty pews. He needs your presence and prayers at the services in the sanctuary. There is nothing harder than to preach to empty pews. He must have *living beings* whose countenances show appreciative and responsive souls breathing out prayers in his behalf. The minister looks over the congregation and sees your pew vacant and at once it cools his ardor. He may have driven five or six or even more miles through heat or cold, through rain or sunshine, across almost impassable roads, but observes your absence, when you have but a few squares to the house of the Lord. Surely, if you are a consistent church member, you have a greater interest in your church and a greater love for your pastor than be so

indifferent to your privileges and duties.

You have pledged your "love and co-operation," through your representatives —the church officers—when he is called to become your pastor, and, pray tell me, why so indifferent and unfaithful now? He is fulfilling his part of the contract. In his quiet study he has you in mind during the preparation of his sermons, but you are seldom seen at the regular Lord's Day services, much less at the mid-week prayer meeting, and, consequently, his message will not inspire nor encourage nor comfort you.

Remember, there is nothing that causes more anxiety, to an earnest pastor, than the careless, haphazzard manner in which some people regard the sacred privilege of attending the services in the sanctuary, not to say anything of their duty to attend, for which God holds them accountable.

But happy, thrice happy, are we, who are messengers of God, preaching the *Glad Tidings* to a dying world, that we find many true, good, and faithful members, in our parishes, who, when they are absent, have a real and not an imaginary reason.

To the minister there is nothing more beautiful than to see the whole family—father, mother, young men, and young women—in their accustomed places at all times and upon all occasions.

Then, again, if your pastor gives you a discourse which cheers your soul and encourages you to a higher life, let him know that it has done you good. He is not asking for vain, empty applause, but it does his soul good to know that he has been instrumental, in God's hands, of helping and cheering some pilgrim on his way to the heavenly home. He ofttimes needs a word of encouragment. At

times, he thinks his work is for naught or may be his preaching does not reach the people, while, at the same time, his people love him greatly and are highly benefited by his sermons but are too timid to tell him so.

It has been the experience of more than one minister, who thought his efforts not appreciated or for naught, answered a *call* to some other field, and, when about to leave, only realized how much he and his services were appreciated by his parishioners. It was then he said: Had I only been conscious of the fact that my efforts were so much appreciated I would have been content to remain. Thus, my dear readers, I would say: Do not forget to show your appreciation before it is too late. As my good Virginia classmate used to say "It does us a heap of good" to receive a word of encouragment once in a while.

Another way to encourage your pastor is: Pay your salary promptly. It is an honest debt and you desire to maintain your honor as a church.

Your pastor has obligations to meet. He has many demands of which others know nothing. There is no class of professional men more poorly paid, for their services rendered, than the ministry, when you take into consideration the time and money and energy spent in the preparation for his calling, and let it be understood; that we are not in the ministry solely with a mercenary end in view, and, yet, the minister and his family must live, and, I believe, it is the sacred duty of every man to lay something aside for old age, but this, under the present salary system, means the strictest economy—most ministers learn to practice economy by force of necessity—and in many cases it is simply impossible to more than make

ends meet, especially if the minister was obliged to go into debt for his education as many must do.

But, if you are the true kind of church member, you are *jealous* of your minister, that is, you desire that he and his family may be dressed respectably and live as cozily and comfortably as your neighbor's minister, and he must do this on a small salary, and that, ofttimes, in arrearages for more than six months, while your neighbor's pastor receives three times as much, promptly paid up.

Try to be consistent, in this as in all your other church relations, and, remember, no money invested will bring greater returns to a community than that which is invested in the Gospel, not, of course, directly in dollars and cents, but in those things which are priceless: happiness, peace, morality, thrift, and noble aims in life, in fact, in the Christian virtues which

make prosperity possible. Do, then, see to it that your salary is paid promptly and have the honor and self-respect not to pay an insignificant contribution. We have known of some so-called church members who would leave their *Church obligations* unpaid for a period of more than three years, and, at last, when approached and urged, repudiate it; and they were not the poorest among the humble band of disciples, either. No, thank God for the poor as the world reckons wealth. Their wants are few. They find their chief joy in the Lord, and, therefore, are usually prompt in meeting their obligations and in responding to the various appeals of the church at home and abroad. But is those who come clad in purple and fine linen, those who live the most elaborately and feast the most sumptuously that are dishonest in their church obligations. But rest assured there will

be a day when all will be judged by the true standard. Such, indeed, make the heart of the minister sad.

I know of a working maid who in a quiet and humble way contributes more, toward the support of the Gospel, than her mistress. "They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

These think the minister can wait until the last, and, of course, he will if he must.

He is all the time preaching about money! Yes, he needs it. Like the old colored minister who was taken to task because he asked so often for money—His critic quoting the passage of Scripture referring to his "reward being in heaven"—replied, "Yes brudder, but I cannot live on that now, I cannot preach here and board in heaven, I must board here, at least, so long as I am preaching here."

I beg you, my friends, do not humiliate your pastor. Pay your salary promptly and cheerfully that he may be relieved of all unnecessary anxiety concerning his temporal obligations. *He* has earned what you owe him many times over. It will be much easier to pay him promptly than to allow it to accumulate. The cash system is the best for all concerned in the end.

Again, you can assist and encourage your pastor by contributing toward the benevolent operations of the church at large as he asks of you. Remember, he will not ask you to contribute toward any cause which is unworthy—classes, synods and the different church bodies always discuss the various demands made for aid, and they arrive at their conclusions after due deliberation and earnest prayer. These bodies apportion the amounts needed and send them down to the vari-

ous charges, and, now they look to the pastor to see that the moneys are raised.

If they are not raised, your pastor is, at times, accused of failing to do his whole duty by not properly presenting and urging, the claims of the classis, to his church or charge. In this your pastor needs your co-operation and response in a tangible form. He distributes envelopes and makes an earnest appeal, but, alas! how often those little envelopes—mute messengers pleading a cause—are consigned to the flames, and on the day appointed for the offering, possibly, only half of them return bearing a gift unto the Lord. While the coppers and nickels are the most in evidence on the collection plates, "Alexander, the coppersmith," still continues, as of old, to interfere with the spread of the Gospel.

I kindly plead with you, church members, awaken to a full sense of your duty!

Have faith in your pastor. When he presents the claims of the church, help him to maintain the honor of your charge and church. It is your duty as well as a blessed privilege to give to and have part in the spreading of God's Kingdom, and in helping the poor and needy for, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these ye have done it unto me." Oh! make *your* pastor feel and realize that you have faith in him, and, that you mean to be a *helper* and not a *hinderer* in the cause of Christ, and his labor in your midst will be with a light heart, and in reality a "labor of love," and he will have reason to thank God that his "lot has fallen into pleasant places."

In all things give him your confidence and co-operation. Do not be afraid you are doing too much for the cause of Christ. Put your shoulder to the Gospel chariot and help to lift. In fact, be a church

member in reality, not in name only.

Pray that the Holy Spirit may give your pastor and your church officers wisdom and power and might to guide the affairs of the church militant aright, so that it may be a great power for good in the world.

Do all you can to cheer and lighten your pastor's labors. He needs those who "laugh when he laughs" and those who "weep when he weeps." He needs the touch that will make him strong. He needs your love and encouragement. He needs others to stand by and assist him in bearing the burdens of the parish, and, remember, as you are true to your pastor you are true to God who sent him.

"Lord, Thine appointed servants bless,
That they may faithful be,
To preach the truth in righteousness,
And sinners win to Thee.
Uphold them by Almighty power,
Thy strength divine impart,
And, in each dark and trying hour,
Cheer Thou their fainting heart."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PASTOR'S VISITING.

With some ministers, the visiting feature has become the most prominent. It appears to be their forte and the people have come to expect it.

This has its place, in our ministerial labors, but it is not by any means all, nor is it the chief means for developing Christian character. It is true, by coming in contact with his parishioners, in their everyday life, the minister sees his people as he does not anywhere else, and he learns to know their needs and wants and environments as he can in no other way, and, thus, having his congregation in mind, while preparing his sermons, he can prepare for them that spiritual food which

their souls long for and stand most in need of.

But the minister must have his hours of quiet and rest—his periods for holy meditation and communion with God.

His study is his *holy* of *holies* where he gathers strength and grace for his ministrations. If he is to "preach the Word" he must study it with all diligence. If he is to inspire, his people, to a higher and better life, he himself must be full of holy fire. *He* cannot give that which he does not himself possess. He cannot lead unless he himself knows the way. He must keep fresh and strong, and this strength he gains in his private studies and devotions. He is doing an injury to himself, as well as to his people, if he spends the time, necessary for study and pulpit preparation, in visiting—and thus feed his people on husks. He will be a "back number" before he has reached the period

at which he should be most useful. He will reach the "dead line" in early life.

No, my dear readers, do not expect your minister to do with his feet what should be done with his head. You come to the Divine services to be fed on spiritual food, to be instructed in the way of godliness, to be inspired with holy zeal, and it is his duty to prepare himself to do it.

"A house-going pastor makes a church-going people" may be true in some parts of our church, but my experience and observations have failed to convince me of the fact.

My experience has been, that the people who complain most because the pastor does not visit them enough are the ones who are the most irregular and indifferent, and I have also learned that those who do not attend services nor take an active part in church work, unless the pastor

visits them often, do not amount to much even if he does visit them frequently. Some people expect the impossible from their pastor. They are selfish with him. They want him all to self. But a man has a large and widely-scattered field of three or four congregations over a radius of ten or more miles, and he must drive many miles before he reaches his members in the outlying limits. In such a field it is almost the next thing to impossible to visit the whole charge, as frequently as some seem to desire, and at the same time attend faithfully to all the other duties of the pastorate—with man there are impossible things.

True, I would not wholly set aside pastoral visitation. It has its place and I aim as near as possible to fulfil that part of my ministerial labors, and where it is practicable, as in the city or larger towns, where the membership is not so widely

scattered as in a country charge, there more frequent visits are in place. There the minister has his mornings and evenings to himself and can spend the afternoons in the homes of his members.

Of course, the aged and infirm, and the sick, who in the providence of God cannot come to worship in the sanctuary, those deserve our special care and comfort, but, in my humble judgment, others who are younger and whom we see at their accustomed places, in the sanctuary, Sabbath after Sabbath, such do not need nor should they demand our special time which should be employed in other channels.

Then, my dear reader, I beg you, be considerate, in this as in all other things, knowing that, if your minister does not come to see you as often as you would like to have him, he thinks you do not need his special attention. He looks after

the most needy and wayward and you can feel yourself complimented to think that you need no special attention. "They that are whole have no need of the physician."

Remember, the minister is interested, in the welfare of his flock, as no other man can be. He delights to see you prosperous and happy, and he wishes you well, in all that is honorable and legitimate, and when sorrow or sickness comes into your home, and you desire his presence and comfort, if you send for him he will only too gladly respond; Remember this; because, ofttimes, there has been sickness or sorrow in one of our homes for weeks before we knew it and they wondered why we did not come to see and comfort them. Some people are very irregular at the Lord's Day services and, when they are absent, it is no unusual thing and, hence, their absence does not solicit inquiries concerning their welfare, and it has been

my experience, that such are the most easily offended, if the minister fails to visit them when they are ill.

But, my friends, if you consider a little you will realize that the minister has a multitude of subjects claiming his thoughts and attention and he may not know of your illness. He cannot know all the time how all his members are,—He is not omniscient.

Do, then, be as considerate with your pastor as you are with your family physician. When you want the physician's service you send for him. Do likewise with your pastor and he will respond as quickly as can be done.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OLD MINISTER AND HOW HE SHOULD BE TREATED.

My dear reader, are you a member of a congregation or charge which has had the services of a good, faithful minister for many long years?

Perhaps he came, to you, young and fresh from the "School of the Prophets" with the fire and zeal which goes with youth and young manhood.

His aims and hopes were high and holy. His "air castles" were grand and imposing. He came into your midst and launched upon an untried sea. Your fathers and mothers, long since gone to their rich reward, received him with a hearty welcome,—this was in the long

ago—and the work of the charge, or parish, at once assumed a different aspect. The little church soon proved inadequate to accommodate the large audiences that came out to hear him; some of the more sinister minded then said: "A new broom sweeps clean," and many came out of sheer curiosity and after a time again fell back to their old ways; coming but once or twice a year in order to let the minister and people know that they "are still holding to the church."

But, your minister keeps on truly and faithfully and the Christian fathers and mothers of Israel—God bless them—remain faithful by his side. They come out through heat and cold, through rain and sunshine. They receive from his ministrations, comfort, inspiration, and edification.

He is a man above the average in ability; sincere and earnest and full of zeal for God's cause.

The members soon realize his worth and, like the people of Ephesus, "would pluck out their eyes" for him.

He may receive a call, or an invitation to come and locate in some other "field," more promising than theirs, but, with tears and pleadings, they entreat him not to leave them. "You shall never leave us," they say, "until death doth take thee."

He remains, serving a large and widely-scattered charge, on a small salary by which he can barely make ends meet—except by the strictest economy—he must sacrifice, but for their sakes he is willing to do so because the fathers and mothers love and appreciate him and his work, but he is not able to lay anything aside for old age.

The days and years come and go, the fathers and mothers fall asleep and are now lying in the village churchyard, en-

joying their well-earned rest in the heavenly home. Your faithful minister has laid them, tenderly, to rest, and the green grass "grows in heaped turfs" over their sleeping places. *He* gave you comfort and consolation out of the rich promises in God's Word. He told you of the glorious hope and the happy home in store for those who live and die in the Lord.

You become attached to him as a spiritual father. He lays his hands upon your head and asks God's blessing to rest upon you. He dedicates your children, for you, in baptism to the Triune God. He becomes, in fact, so closely identified with your congregation as a father over all.

Age and sad, as well as joyous, experiences have matured his judgment, ripened his scholarship, and made his heart tender and easily touched. He has truly grown old "in the harness." The fathers and mothers who stood by his side and

strengthened him, when young, are no more; they are sleeping in Machpelah's burying ground.

He, too, is nearing life's sunset. He realizes that the infirmities of age are telling on him. He has given you the best days of his life. His step is not so firm as it once was. His sermons may not be so full of "holy fire" as they were, in days gone by, but they are fuller of the love of Jesus, fuller of heaven, you may rest assured.

Some one intimates that "our pastor is getting too old to serve us acceptably." Another says: "He is getting to be a 'back number' and we should get rid of him and secure the service of a younger man who can *reach* the younger element" —these are chords of dissension, these are pebbles that disturb the calm waters, these are apples of discord and, the young, who never thought anything else than

that he was the best man living, will begin to find fault, and your people can prepare for the revolution that is sure to come.

What is to be done? He is now old. He has given his whole life, or the best part of it, to your church. He has been with you in joy and sorrow, in the day of prosperity and in the night of adversity. He is old now and, unless he has children to whom he can go and with whom he may make his home, he will not know what to do and the heart strings almost break.

In all other professions you wish the service of a man of experience. When you have dangerous illness in your family you want a physician who has had long experience and who has proved himself capable. You do not wish to risk your life to a novice. When you have an important case before the courts of justice

you want an experienced attorney to look after your interests. *In* the schools you wish a teacher, for an important position, who has had experience, but, in the ministry, in our day, for some cause or other, age, experience, and ripe scholarship do not count much; the only qualification is: "He must be a *young* man"—this seems to be a travesty on the judgment of the church people.

But we need not argue that feature any further. It is a foregone conclusion; you have decided that you must have a young man and that settles the whole matter once for all. The next question that naturally presents itself is: What is to be done with the old minister? He is too old for you. Maybe some small, struggling charge could use him? and perhaps not. Do you mean to turn him out in the cold world near the evening of life?

You know he is old and he has been at

an expense of which few outside of the ministry know. He may have, by strict economy and a great deal of self-denial, managed to save a little for the declining days, but in many cases he has not sufficient to give him a comfortable income for the remainder of his life. What shall he do? He is ashamed to beg. He is too honest to steal. He is too old to do manual labor. He cannot well do anything else for he prepared himself for the ministry and did not keep up with the other professions. Must he do day's work as I know of one who, when too old to preach, must do in order to get his bread and butter?

The sad fact too often is: unless he has children with whom he can spend the remainder of his days and there think over the good days that are past, he might be obliged to knock at the poor house for entrance.

It is shameful, in the highest degree,

not to say sinful to turn out, into the cold world, an old, faithful pastor who was dearly beloved by your fathers and mothers in days gone by.

Oh! honor him, respect him, and keep him to the close of his life, for the good he has done. If he is too old and feeble to assume the active duties of your congregation, then elect another and a younger man to assume the duties of the charge, but let the old father be "pastor emeritus" with a small salary so that he may still worship with you and thus spend the remainder of his days with the people he loved so long and well. You will never miss the extra salary it will take, and you will feel so much better when you yourselves will come to the "Indian summer of life." Yes. Make his last days as peaceful, as comfortable, as quiet, and as happy as possible.

Ian McClaren had an article on "Should

the Old Clergyman Be Shot?" in the Christmas number of the Ladies' Home Journal, 1899, and after discussing the situation, from the standpoint of a lay member, finally comes to the conclusion that the best way to get rid of the worn-out old minister was to shoot him.

This in some respects would be an easier death than many meet, for the manner, I have noticed, in which one or two congregations treated an old, faithful servant it meant death from a broken heart, which was slower and more painful than by shooting.

I sometimes wonder when some people reach that "happy land" for which they pray, and find the old minister inside, if they would not be ashamed to enter.

Oh! be kind to him for what he has done. Cast him not off in the time of old age and forsake him not when his strength faileth, and when you meet him in that

heavenly home it will be a day of joy and gladness.

"Gone!—have ye all then gone—
The good, the beautiful, the kind, the dear?
Passed to your glorious rest so swiftly on,
And left me weeping here?"

CHAPTER X.

THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

It goes without saying: That the Church is a Divine-human organization. An organization must have laws and regulations, and as we must have officers, to see that the laws are executed, and who have in their hands the management of her affairs, so are there times when nominations and elections are necessary to select them.

The Church must have her officers who constitute a body, in whose hands are the spiritual and temporal management of the Church, and whether you call this body a Consistory, a Church council, a vestry, or by whatever name, it is the privilege and

duty of the members to elect—say by voice or vote who shall have in their hands the affairs of the church, for a given time, at least.

There is here as in other things diversity of opinions, as to how the candidates for office are to be named or nominated. In some places the consistory or church council names one ticket and the congregation names another and then the two named tickets are placed before the congregation and the members vote their preference.

Another, and, we think, a better, and wiser method of making nominations, is to let the consistory name twice the number of officers to be elected and then submit them to the congregation to be voted upon. Our reason for preferring the latter mode can be expressed in a few words. It is this: The consistory or council can discuss the relative merits of

the available members for the sacred office as cannot be done in the presence of the congregation. It is a great honor to bear office in the Lord's house; so also does it bring grave and sacred duties and responsibitities, to each one, which should not be considered lightly.

A man may have business ability and tact but may lack the moral qualifications. While another may have the moral sincerity and enthusiasm for the Lord's cause but lack ability and judgment in other respects, while all these combined, as near as possible, is what the Church needs in her officers.

Ofttimes a mistake is made, in the selection of officers, by nominating some general favorite who is a whole-souled, hail-fellow-well-met, because among a certain set he may be a popular idol, while otherwise he may not possess the first principles necessary for a cup bearer in the Lord's house.

Sometimes, too, we have known a man to be nominated and elected to the sacred and responsible office "for a joke," just as if the church and the Lord's cause were to be conducted for the sport and amusement of the members. This is wrong, in the highest degree, not to say sinful, and the crippled and sad condition of some churches' managment are the fruits of this pernicious policy.

Then, again, there is another fallacy in nominating and electing a man to the sacred office, in order to get him interested in the work of the Church.

One of my good old teachers often told us: "Gentlemen, never have a man put in as an officer, who does not take an interest in the Church, in order to get him interested, for, if he is not interested before, be assured, he will not become interested, when an officer, and you and the Church must suffer for the experiment."

I have learned the truth, of his admonition, to my sorrow, in my brief ministry.

The fact is, my friends, if a man is not full of the love of God and His cause before he is an officer, in the Church, it is a very dangerous experiment to elect him to that sacred and responsible position with the idea in view of getting him interested. A man who is so full of the world that he wears himself out, during the six laboring days, in accumulating this world's goods, so that on the quiet Sabbath morning he *must* rest and thus cannot get ready for services or that he is so busy with his own affairs that he has *no time* during the week for a consistory or council meeting, such a man is not the kind that the Church of Jesus Christ wants at the head of her ministrations; we want men, and we must and can have them, who have the love of the Church, at heart, enough to be able to give her

some time and consideration. We want men, as officers, who are not afraid they are doing too much for the Church, men who will stand by the eternal principles of right; men who are *sober*, *honest*, *diligent* and *upright*; men who give their life and influence to nothing that would bring dishonor upon the religion of Jesus Christ; men who are burning with the love of Christ and His cause—for it is a self-evident fact, that, in order to succeed in anything, a man must be in love with his task, and, at the same time, be conscious of the sense of responsibility which is resting upon him. We want conscientious men, men who are conscious of the fact, that every honor, every privilege, every blessing, and every opportunity they have brings, to them, grave responsibilities and sacred duties which they dare not neglect.

The Church officers are the minister's

cabinet—his advisers and helpers—they are to be, "unto him, hands and eyes," and remember this, my friends, the honor and welfare of your Church, to a great extent, rests upon their shoulders. They represent your Church, before the higher judicatories and before the world, and you wish to be represented by the best, the noblest, and the most Christlike.

But let us assume the nominations for officers are made and the day for election is near at hand, and, now, do not forget to pray to the Father, to guide and enlighten you, so that you may put aside all personal preferences and cast your vote for the one, or ones, answering most nearly to the ideal officer, as God would like to have him be. Do not vote for a man, principally, that you may confer, upon him, the great honor, though he may be your best friend. Remember, the honor and welfare of the Church are at

stake. But vote as you think will be the best for the good of the Church and the glory of God, and, especially, be it far from you to vote for an officer "merely for a joke;" the Church of Jesus Christ is not a joke and she does not exist for the amusement of her members, but for the salvation of souls and you want officers who love souls and are full of Christian zeal.

In a few words, pray right and then vote as you pray and your officers and your Church will be as God meant they should be.

"Endow them with a heavenly mind;
Supply their every need;
Make them in spirit meek, resigned,
But bold in word and deed."

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP, OR SHOULD A CHRISTIAN TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN POLITICS?

Should the Christian take part in politics? You ofttimes hear it said: "That religion and politics do not go together." Pray tell me why should they not? If they do not they surely should, and once politics is conducted on the principle of the Golden Rule—as it should be—then religion and politics will go together; and whose duty but the Christian citizen's is it to make it such?

We should take our religion with us to the polls and then vote as we pray. Are politics, in our day, too corrupt for a Christian man to take part in? and, if so,

what has made them such? Does not the whole secret, of corrupt politics, lie in the fact that the spoilsmen are trying to run the machinery of our municipal, county, state and national government for policy's sake, and are content to sacrifice the eternal principles of right and justice, using all means, whether honorable or otherwise, to accomplish their end?

We hear the local politician echo, the cry of the "boss"—"Be loyal to the old standard," and too many voters go to the polls "like dumb driven cattle" and cast their ballot and influence at the beck and bidding of a few political leaders who make them believe the salvation of the country is at stake and depends on the success of their party.

But "all men cannot be fooled all the time," and, in time they see their mistakes, become disgusted and finally remain entirely away from the polls, and

the "boss" and his *hangers on* have things their own way, and matters assume a more forboding aspect than ever. It is simply going from bad to worse. Therefore, we say, the Christian citizen should vote. He should give his influence for the good of the government, under which he and his must live. His religious principles—the eternal principles of right—should be stronger than his love for party. He should vote for the man or men, irrespective of party affiliations, who have character and moral stamina, whose "word is as good as his bond." Let character and attainments be the sole qualifications necessary for a candidate—for character is more than party.

The more independent voters a district has the better and purer will be its laws and its officers. If the government of a people is oppressive and ruled by a few—a veritable oligarchy—it is because the

people will it to be so, for, you can rest assured, once they rise, to a full sense of their duty, like one man with a single, noble aim in view, no power on earth can stay them.

On the other hand, if the Christian citizens remain away from the polls and allow the grogshop politician to vote his hangerson, thus bringing about laws that are distasteful and oppressive, they have no right to complain.

It is the duty of every law-abiding and liberty-loving citizen to vote at every election, and he *should* vote in accordance with his own convictions. The ballot thief, and all others, who make a business of politics, and thus want dishonest government, which best serves their end, will be certain to vote not only once, but as often as they can. Those who are interested in corrupt elections are certain to give their whole time and labor, in order

that they may accomplish their end, and, surely every honest and well-meaning citizen should perform his duty, at the polls, and give his vote and influence in selecting the best candidate, for every office, regardless of party.

The better class of citizens, interested as they should be, in the public welfare, are beginning to see the evils of too many of our political caucuses, and are, therefore, beginning to vote independent and we see the signs of better times sending their rays of light across the eastern mountain heights.

There are festering sores on our body politic because the good citizens have, too long, stood aloof and permitted the "boss and spoilsman" to have his own way, and, once men vote as they pray, these social and political vices which are a menace to our free institutions and government will be delegated into the realms of oblivion.

But as long as Christian men pray one way and vote another, so long will the evils of our government be here to oppress us. By all means, Christian brethren, pray right, but, then, do not forget to vote as you pray, and then, those evils which are now, like a canker worm, sapping the life from our nation will be crushed.

These evils come by legislation and they must go as they came—by legislation.

The damnable drink traffic, which is one of the worst cancerous sores on our national life, undermining health, dwarfing ability, bringing hell and damnation to homes which otherwise could be happy and peaceful, is here because of legislation—because the representatives whom we help to elect are too often bought to vote, for it, in our legislative halls. The gambling and lottery laws and the privi-

leges which the great corporations and monopolies enjoy. The laws which fix the prices on everything you buy or sell, and which enrich the stockholders at the expense of the consumer—of whom you are one—and which is making the rich richer and the poor, at least, relatively poorer, all these and a host of other harmful and pernicious laws, favoring a few at the expense of the many, are thrust upon us, and they mean, to every man, a larger outlay for the necessaries of life; they mean, that you and your family, shall henceforth, receive fewer of the necessaries and luxuries of life, for the same amount of money, and they mean that you take less for that which you have to sell.

The price is fixed on everything you buy or sell, and what will you do about it? These things can be remedied and the remedy lies in the pure and free use

of the ballot in the hands of the better people. The fact is, the politician who is in it for the spoils is ready and willing to promise anything and everything until after his election when he votes and gives his influence the way that brings in the most money for him.

Let the Christian man vote for men of principle—men who do not make politics a business, no matter what his party convictions may be. It is the chief business of the spoilsman to get himself and his associates maintained at the public expense, and, according to his standard, the chief duty, of a public official, is to draw his salary regularly.

No, my friends, we want, and we need, and we will have, if you say so, an honest government, and this should call loudly upon every good citizen to come forth and say, by ballot, who shall handle the revenues paid by the tax-payers and who

shall make and enforce our laws. It is your privilege, will you use it?

Remember, your Christianity should show itself in all your various relations of life; you, as a citizen, owe duties to your community and to your nation, and, it is your duty as well as privilege. to say who shall have in charge your muninicpal, your county, your state and national government.

Remember, you have not only a right and privilege but it is your duty to exercise your citizenship. Do this intelligently and conscientiously as God shall give you light, and your government will be purified, and in time will be clean, as it should be, and then you can take your religion into your politics and your politics into your religion.

"So live that when the mighty caravan,
Which halts one night time in the vale of death,
Shall strike its white tents for the morning march.
Thou shalt mount upward to the eternal hills,
Thy foot unwearied, and thy strength renewed,
Like the strong eagle for the upward flight."

CHAPTER XII.

MISSIONS AND WHY I BELIEVE IN THEM.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," etc., was one of the last commandments, of our blessed Lord, to his disciples, and this, like all the other commands, should be obeyed by his disciples today. All his commands are just and reasonable, and, as we still rely upon his promises which are to us no less than to our children, so are his commandments also binding, and furthermore, on truly benevolent principles we are constrained to bring the "glad tidings of peace and good will" to those who sit in darkness and are waiting for the light.

The principle of Christianity is the direct opposite of selfishness and exclu-

siveness. One of the great fundamental doctrines which Jesus taught, by word and precept, was the "Brotherhood of the race." With Him there was "neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free" but Christ was all and in all.

In the parable of "The Good Samaritan" He taught us to help the needy no matter to what race, color or nationality they belonged. We are to extend the hand of help to raise the fallen, to cheer the faint, to give them a higher and nobler view of life, and a hope for the life to come.

In the Sermon upon the Mount, His introductory sermon, He emphasizes the same principle: "As ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them likewise." Put the "Golden Rule" into practice and place yourself in the position of the heathen. Imagine yourself, in their sad condition, sitting in darkness

and waiting for the light of the Gospel of Christ which would bring the manifold blessings which go with the religion of Jesus Christ.

Study the sad condition of those whom God has made for true nobleness, and see, if you would not desire others to help you, if you were as they are.

There are so many who do not seem to appreciate that the blessings, which the Gospel of Christ have brought them, have also brought duties and responsibilities which they owe to their fellowmen in other lands.

We are living in a land of light and liberty, today, because: We have the open Bible, and the hallowed influence of the quiet Sabbath day; and, the fires of incense and prayers are rising from ten thousand family altars at the beginning and close of every day.

We are a Christian land and nation be-

cause: Our forefathers, from across the sea, sent missionaries among us, at a time when we were near to becoming a nation of infidels.

There are none of the original churches in America but which received their first ministers, and the means to support them, from the fatherlands beyond the broad Atlantic. Michael Schlatter, the pioneer of our beloved Zion, after viewing the situation of the spiritual condition of the people scattered through the wilds of Southern Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia and seeing their need for the Gospel of Christ, returned to his native land and made known their wants, and, history tells us, how liberally they responded. On his return he brought, with him, £12,000 and six noble young men consecrated to the Gospel ministry, and those Christian fathers and mothers, who were waiting on this side for shep-

herds to feed them the "bread of life," "thanked God and took courage."

Do you say, then, we owe nothing to missions? Did others ignore our cry for help? Did they turn a deaf ear to the "Macedonian call" coming from the wilds of America? History answers: No! And, now, shall we who live in the light of that Gospel, shall we, who are reaping and enjoying the fruits of that sowing, be content to enjoy those blessings while others call, to us, for help?

Oh, Christian people, remember, this privilege places upon us a sacred responsibility and a most solemn duty which we cannot ignore.

Then, again, think of it, my friends; had St. Paul directed his missionary operations toward the East, instead of bearing the banner of the Cross into the wilds of Europe, then China and Japan might have become Christianized, and instead of

we sending missionaries to them, they would needs bring the Gospel to us.

Under the providence of God we know that where there is life there must be activity. When a fountain ceases to flow it becomes a stagnant pool which breeds deadly diseases. To live it must pour forth, and so with the Church of Christ, she exists for something, and that church which does not send forth the light of the Gospel to other benighted lands. That church or that member who is not interested in missions—in the welfare of his fellowmen in need—has not yet learned the first principles of Christianity.

The congregation that withholds the Gospel from others will soon lose it herself. "He who is poor in charity is poor indeed." The question which comes home to each one of us is not: Will the heathen be saved without my help? but, will I be saved if I am unfaithful to my

trust, and ignore the commands of my Lord and Master, whom I profess to follow?

That oft-mooted and threadbare argument (I question seriously if it can claim the title of argument) which we ofttimes hear expressed, when an appeal is made for missions: "I do not believe in missions. I do not believe in sending money away to the heathens. We have heathens at home to convert. Let us convert them first, and then begin with those in other lands," is born either of ignorance, or is a cowardly excuse for stinginess, or selfishness, or all combined, and, in my mind, at least, is the expression of one who by his very words is a *self-confessed heathen.* For, pray tell me, what else than a heathen may we call a man who does not believe in the promises and commandments of God's word? He does not believe in missions? Then let him tell us what part

of the Bible does he believe? Has he a mutilated Bible from which all passages, relating to missions, are expurgated? If so, then he has a Bible without God, a Bible without Jesus, a Bible without the Apostles, a Bible without the sermon on the Mount, a Bible without the Ten Commandments, a Bible without the Lord's Prayer, in fact, a Bible which is no Bible at all—the play Hamlet without a Hamlet—for the central thought, the underlying principle, from Genesis to Revelation teaches us love to God through love to man.

My friends! if you do not believe in missions it is necessary for you to read God's word more diligently, it is necessary for you to pray more earnestly that God may enlighten your minds and that He may sanctify your affections. You must needs be emptied of self and filled with love to God and fellowman and,

then, your heart will go out in a practical and substantial manner to those poor, benighted of our fellowmen sitting in darkness and waiting for the Gospel light. Then you will thank God that you are living in a missionary age and can have a part and privilege in the evangelization of the world.

Remember, "the heathens at home," of whom you speak, all have had the opportunity of the Gospel, lo these many years, but they have wilfully hardened their hearts and turned away from the light. We have done our duty with them, and if they perish, in their sins, their blood rests upon their own heads.

But the Macedonian call comes, to us, from lands beyond the seas, and it is ours to respond. For those, who deny Christianity to others, cannot retain it long themselves. "Charity begins at home" but if it ends there it is a poor charity in-

deed. The chief concern of the Christian is not his own salvation but the salvation of others. He saves his own soul by helping to save others. The religion of Jesus Christ is not egotistic but altruistic, and the Church that lives only for self will soon not live at all. We are not to be concerned principally about the saving of our own souls but in that of others and thus, by saving others only can we save ourselves.

Jesus asks for self denial; He asks for that love which prompts us to sacrifice for the good of others. Some people's idea of charity is; giving away what they do not want themselves, but the most acceptable gifts are those which cost us something.

The love, of Jesus, for fallen and sinful mankind caused him to sacrifice "the glory which He had with the Father" and coming as man among us men, the Sin-

less One bearing the sins of the whole world.

While we, too often, when the Church makes an appeal, say: "I'll see if I can spare it," which means: "I'll see if I have any money left after I have gratified all my own desires, after I have everything just as I want it, after I have all the necessaries and luxuries, then if I have anything to spare I'll give it to the Lord's cause."

Too many are like the Pharisee who thank God that they are not like the heathen, but forget that their privileges and opportunities bear with them grave responsibilities.

How much are you to give? This question you can best answer for yourself. Ask, what would Jesus give, if he were situated in life as you are?

Give as the Lord has prospered you. Give that which requires sacrifice and you

will give according to the Bible standard.

The widow gave her mite which was all that she had. Here you are stewards. Give to the Lord what belongs to Him. *Be* faithful to your Lord's commands and you will be faithful to yourself.

Oh, I pray you, do not ignore Christ's commandments else you are worse than a heathen; you have the Gospel light, "walk as children of light." "Cast your bread upon the waters and it will return again."

"Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHURCH MEMBER'S WEDDING DAY.

This is a sacred, a solemn step which no one should take lightly. The solemn words, which are to bind two hearts and two hands together forever, and which will change the currents of your lives, can be spoken in a moment, but a life-time is required to fulfil them, and the neglect of this duty will cast its shadow upon eternity.

The wedding day marks the beginning of a new career which, in God's providence, is intended to make you wiser, better, and more useful in the world, and, if the vows are faithfully kept by both parties, you will grow to understand and appreciate one another more highly as

the years come and go, so that when death, at last, breaks the link that binds you, it will find the two hands more fondly clasped and the two hearts more closely joined than on the day that you plighted your troths "before God and man."

The permanent union of one man with one woman establishes a relation of affections and interests which can, in no other way, be made to exist between two human beings, and it calls forth tendencies and capacities and powers for good which were not even known before.

My aim, in this article, is not to give Scriptural proofs of God's sanction and commands to enter the holy state of matrimony, nor do I wish to philosophize on the congeniality of spirits necessary to a happy union of two souls—all which are of the greatest importance. But I propose to deal with the simple fact of mar-

riage. It is one of those things which comes about somehow and some way that baffles explanation. But, let us assume, the days of wooing are drawing to a close. The engagement is announced and the wedding is to follow, as a matter of course.

The next question comes: "Where shall we plight our troth?" This depends on individual choice. Some prefer the church, within her walls consecrated and made hallowed by sacred memories, before her *holy* of *holies*, where they were baptized and confirmed—they think this preferable to any other place for taking the solemn vow.

Others prefer the home, about which cluster so many fond and sacred memories of by-gone days—the home which the bride is now about to leave—this she thinks the best place for her.

Others, again, prefer a quiet wedding,

and, for reasons best known to themselves, they visit the parsonage and there have the solemn words pronounced.

Next, who is the best fitted to pronounce the *marriage ceremony*, which is one of the sacred institutions of our holy religion? Surely, in my mind, not a *justice of the peace*, nor any other secular officer, can pronounce these solemn words, in a becoming manner, with the brogue of the criminal court on his lips. This makes it a civil contract, and does away with that sacredness, which belongs to it, since the time of man's innocency, and, in some States, none but a regular ordained priest or minister of the Gospel is permitted to perform the marriage ceremony—this is as it should be everywhere.

You are a member of the church of Jesus Christ, and you believe marriage to be a sacred institution of the church, do not, therefore, demean it by having some

secular officer to go through the ceremony in a haphazzard and perfunctory manner. You desire no "*mock marriage.*" You want "God and His holy angels to witness it," and, therefore, you must have regards to the place as well as to the person who is to perform it, and none but a regular ordained minister, who has been consecrated, is fitted to do so, and none so well as your own pastor. Here let me speak to you confidentially, remember, it always looks more respectful to have your minister with you at that time. When you have sorrow or a death, in your family, you desire him to be with you in the house of mourning, and now remember him also in the hour of joy. *Do* not take your *wedding trip* before you are married and have some strange clergyman "say the words." It always looks more respectable, in the eyes of the world, to take your trip after the wedding. But if

circumstances and conditions are such that you must go away, kindly ask your minister to accompany you, for remember, you are never justified in doing a wrong to your pastor, who is ever interested in your welfare, and is willing to do anything honorable for you.

He needs your encouragement, in this as in all other respects, and it will cause him anxiety. He will wonder what might be wrong that you prefer another to him on such an occasion. In short, always be honorable to your pastor and you will never have cause to regret it.

What of the fee? ah here is the rub; this may have a smacking of the mercenary, but, we hope, the motive in speaking of this feature may not be misunderstood. We simply say: Let the fee be in keeping with other things.

Do not insult the girl, whom you are taking from a good home and whom you

value and admire above all others, by giving a mean little pittance to the parson. Do not undervalue the ceremony when all else is done with an idea for "show."

There are some ladies who, I have no doubt, would blush if they knew the insignificant fees paid at their marriage.

There are some people who save neither effort nor money where they can "make a display," but, where the public does not see, they are mean stingy.

I have witnessed several "swell weddings" where the elite of the city were in high places, where broad cloth dress suits and silks were in evidence, where a sumptuous feast was served, where colored waiters catered to the taste of the guests; where presents aggregating an outlay of hundreds of dollars were to be seen in a brilliantly-lighted room; and where a wedding tour was contemplated, and taken, to all the principal cities,

meaning no less than a hundred or more. But alas! the parson's fee! It was a mere pittance, in fact so small that it barely paid for the marriage certificate with the internal revenue stamp affixed as the law requires.

I know my ministerial brethren will pardon me for divulging one of our secrets, but the fact is: most of us find it necessary to grade our certificates according to the fees.

There are some people who think that a minister's supplies are furnished him gratis. How they have arrived at such a mistaken conclusion we know not, but our supplies cost us actual money, and we find it necessary to exercise the best of judgment otherwise some weddings are to us a financial loss.

Yes, there are many, very many, who when they can make a display curtail no expense, but they must draw the line

somewhere and the parson usually is outside of that line.

Are we wrong in judging the worth of a man by what he does in secret? A man is known by the little things. We are waiting to see. Does he consider the ceremony of so small consequence or does he so little appreciate the services of his wife's minister that anything will do? This manifests a poor principle and and is an insult to the girl whom he married.

"There are smiles and tears in that gathering band
Where the heart is pledged with the trembling hand.
What trying thoughts in the bosom swell,
As the bride bids parents and home farewell!
Kneel down by the side of the tearful fair,
And strengthen the perilous hour with prayer."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EVENING OF LIFE; BE KIND TO THE OLD.

There comes to me a mingled sense of sadness and reverence when I see an aged father or mother basking in the evening twilight of life.

The long shadows falling toward the east indicate that their day has almost closed, and according to the laws of nature, they can be with us only a few more brief years at most.

Their "*Indian summer*" is nearly over and with its close they must bid the world "adieu."

They are living mostly in the past. All their friends of "the days that are gone" are sleeping in the "silent city of the

dead." They are left alone, like some solitary tree marking the place where once upon a time stood a dense forest. They have born the burden and heat of many a summer's sun. Their hairs have been frosted by the snows of many winters. *Time* has taken the elasticity out of their steps. The cares of years made the form, once erect, now bent. The tottering step, the wrinkled brow, the hoary heads, the bent body, the trembling hand, and the melancholy crack in the voice, all indicate the nearness of the end. These prophesy that the journey will soon be over.

They live in the fond memories of the past. Their best days were in the long ago. But now they are strangers in the community where their whole life was spent. The eyes that once looked into theirs with the most tender affections have long since been closed by the hand

of death. The voices that responded to theirs like sweet music; the voices that cheered and stirred their souls with the most tender affections, have been hushed these many years. The old familiar homestead, and the scenes about it, with which were associated so many fond friends of by-gone days, has undergone changes under the ravages of time. Yea, all has changed since the days of their youth, and in the march of time they find themselves strangers in the home of their childhood and youth. They are sad and lonely and with the Psalmist cry out: "Lover and friends thou hast put far from me."

Yes, the old have outlived their day and generation. They cannot become reconciled to the new ways and ideas in life, and, thus, are not in sympathy with the way we do things, hence we naturally think them peculiar. Their language is

often the antiquated brogue of the past generation; and, thus, with all their sorrows and longings they become, to an unfilial son or daughter, a burden.

How sad it is ofttimes to see an old father or mother, who spent a life of sacrifice for their children, when old and feeble, to be shoved aside as an old, worn-out, and useless article of furniture. One such sad incident came under my observation. It was that of an aged mother whom none of her children wished to be troubled with, and, be it said to their shame, all of them had of this world's goods an abundance. When she came she received as cold a reception as the actic explorer, and was soon given to understand that they could put up with her only for a certain definite time, and well did the poor old soul understand what that meant.

So long as she could help them to do

drudgery, and had some money of her own she was received with open arms and the best was scarcely good enough for mother, but, now, since she has given them her all, and is old and feeble and almost helpless, she is an unwelcome guest lest she may become a *charge* to them. With the Psalmist her soul breathes out the words: "Cast me not off in the time of old age and forsake me not when my strength faileth."

My dear readers, can you not remember her for the good she has done in days that are gone by? She it was who bore you and gave you being. She it was who cared for and watched over you during the helpless and trying times of infancy and childhood. Can you not now be a guardian angel of old age?

Oh! be kind to the aged. If they do cost you some extra care and expense, remember, they will not be with you long

anymore, for behold! the shadows are declining and they will soon leave you, and when you must stand beside the open grave you will never have cause to regret what good you have done for them.

We have, indeed, a beautiful example of true filial affection and consideration in Joseph's conduct toward his aged father, Jacob. Though he is ruler of Egypt, yet he is ever mindful of his aged father in far-away Canaan. He sends for him and his kindred and does all he can to make him happy and comfortable the remainder of his days, and, when he dies, Joseph takes his father back to Canaan and has him buried beside his beloved Rachael, as was his last request. Joseph, though he was ruler of Egypt, was not too busy to have his old father about, nor was he afraid lest he might embarrass him by his uncouth and rustic manners.

Another beautiful incident was the con-

duct and consideration of Millard Fillmore, when President of these United States, toward his aged father. We see the elder Fillmore visiting his son, Millard, at Washington, and the care and consideration he showed his aged parent was an example of true filial affection. How he was introduced to all the great men! How he spoke with the great Webster! This was an evergreen spot in the old man's memory, which he could never forget.

This stands out in sharp contrast with the incident, which suggested to Will Carlton the subject for his poem: "OVER THE HILLS TO THE POOR-HOUSE I'VE WANDERED ALONE THERE TO DIE," when a rich and prosperous son had turned his poor old mother out of his home, for the simple reason that it cost too much to keep her, and she having no home crossed the hills

beyond which was located the *poorhouse.*

Shame! shame! on the wretch is the verdict of the whole world. The money, he thus saved, was "blood money." His wealth shall become moth-eaten. His riches are corruption. His love of wealth has dwarfed all his better and higher nature and thus robbed him of the first principles of manhood.

But, thank God, this is a rare exception, and with most sons and daughters that filial spirit is manifested, and the last days of the parents are made as peaceful and comfortable as possible. Both sacred and profane history is rich and full of the noble deeds of sons and daughters in their conduct toward their aged parents, and they never had cause to regret it.

Would that all children were as kind and considerate to their aged parents as was Joseph and Millard Fillmore. Then

we would see fewer lonely old ages and more happiness in the evening of life.

Oh, think of it, friends, many of our parents are near the sunset of life. Many of them have visited us for the last time. Their days are growing few and soon they, too, will sleep in the village graveyard with our ancestors.

The care and attention we bestow upon them will only make us better and nobler, and, when they are no more, the sense of having done our duty with them will come back as so many drops in our cup of joy, and, think of it! What a happy day that will be when we shall meet them in that heavenly home.

Let not the cares of this world engross you so much as to make you too busy to care for them at a time when they need your special care and attention the most. Consider nothing too good nor too expensive for their comfort and convenience.

They will not be here many more days, for behold! the shadows are declining, the sun is fast sinking behind the western hills, and the night is setting in and soon we shall see them "no more for awhile." It is then we feel the force of the words of the poet:—

"Farewell! I did not know thy worth;
But thou art gone and now 'tis prized,
So angels walk unknown on earth,
But when they flew were recognized."

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHRISTIAN FUNERAL.

America's favorite poet has beautifully said:

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howso'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!"

There is no truth more frequently brought to our notice than, "man is mortal and in time must pass away." It is, always, a sad time, when the tender ties of love and friendship are broken in this way, and when we see the remains of our loved ones laid to rest in the silent city where soon the grass will grow green in "heaped turfs."

We all need the help and encourage-

ment, the friendship and love of dear ones, and we are poorer for every friend we lose. Yes, we miss them sorely. When they are gone we feel an aching void, a loneliness which baffles description.

No wonder the tears—those silent tell-tales of deep sorrow—flow unbidden. Under such circumstances our sorrows are too great to be expressed by words, and then the only language is tears. During those sad visitations of Providence there is nothing like the comforting assurance, revealed to us in God's word, of the blessed hope in store for the saints of light, when this weary life shall cease.

Another one of our loved ones gone before us, and now we, perhaps, for the first time look beyond the things of time and have an interest in the heavenly home—for we are always interested in a place where we have friends.

We now want the minister of the Gospel, if at no other time, to be in our home to pray for us, and to speak words of comfort as we sit under the shadow of the cloud.

Naturally, after the first shock, resulting from the loss of a dear one, has passed away, we must needs make arrangements to lay the body to rest. And now let me proffer a word of advice. See that everything is done "with decency and in order." Avoid empty show or vain displays of all kinds as much as can be done. That you desire your pastor's service, at the funeral of a member of the family, is a foregone conclusion. Therefore, remember that, though he is always willing to do all within the limits of justice, common sense, and physical possibility to give you all the comfort to be had, yet he has also a multitude of other grave duties claiming his attention, and, therefore, must needs plan ahead.

Frequently he has other engagements which cannot be postponed without the greatest inconvenience and at times heavy loss. He is not only *your* pastor but has also pledged his service to the other members of the household of faith as well as to the needy outside of the fold of Israel. Then the wisest, the best, and the safest plan—as many of the more thoughtful members do—is to be considerate and respect your minister's rights. Go and consult with him as to the time, all things being favorable, it would be the most suitable to have the last sacred rites. You can name the time when you think it the best for all concerned, and, I assure you, he will do all that is reasonable to conform with your plans. But, if possible, avoid holding the funeral on the quiet Sabbath day—let it be as it signifies a holy day of rest. On that day your pastor, if he has more than

one congregation, as most pastors of our church have, has all he can well do, or else he may be obliged to disappoint a congregation of worshippers who have a right to his service at that time, or he must postpone either the Holy Communion or some special service for which all preparations have been made some weeks ahead, or not be able to officiate at your loved one's funeral which has been my sad experience on several occasions when some good, faithful, aged member whom I loved and cherished must be laid to rest without my services, because *he had to be buried on Sunday* for no other reason than that the family desired a Sunday funeral for which there was no necessity whatever.

One special instance which I now have in mind was that of a young woman who *had to be buried on Sunday*, because some of her nearest kin could not spare the time to attend the day previous.

True, it is, there are some instances, and they have come to our notice, when a Sunday funeral becomes a necessity—as when a young man in the full bloom of health lost his life by a railroad train on Saturday eve, and we must bury him so soon as the necessary arrangments can possibly be made—under such circumstances, which are special, a Lord's Day funeral is justifiable.

Our Synods, Classes, Consistories, in fact all ecclesiastical bodies, with a few exceptions, urge the sancity of the Sabbath day to be observed as much as possible and thus they advise the minister to do all they can to avoid Sunday funerals which make extra labor a necessity, and which also interfere more or less with the sacredness of the day.

If all the ministers of all denominations would co-operate and educate their people against Sunday funerals they could

be done away with entirely except in cases of absolute necessity. But we are sorry of the fact that some ministers are always catering to the populace, and thus, are ever ready to do their bidding.

Instead of educating public sentiment to have a sacred regard for the Holy day they cater to their whims and fancies. They sacrifice principle for policy's sake. They wish to be popular. Desiring the good pleasure of men more than to do the will of God. These words grate harshly on our ears but they are cold facts, which no one will dispute, and not the theories of a day dreamer.

But, I am glad to say, the most unpleasant experiences in regard to funerals, for most ministers, are with those people who are outside of the Church—those who have nothing for the Church and nothing for the minister unless death invades the family circle—these think, they then have

an exclusive right to the minister's service and he must leave all else and come do their bidding. They send for the undertaker and pass by the minister's house. They make all arrangements for the funeral, and, in a day or so later, *send word* to the minister that they *want* him to officiate at the funeral on Sunday morning. They are very thoughtful and ofttimes send a text which is anything but appropriate, they manage to borrow a neighbor's hymn book so they can hand the minister the hymns—one of which invariably is: "Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep," no matter what kind of a life the dead lived he now "*sleeps in Jesus*"—and, if the minister finds it impracticable or impossible to comply with their requests, he usually incurs their enmity which is, as a rule, the most bitter and he is branded and anathematized forever. In short, they *want* the minister to preach comfort when there is

no comfort; they *want* him to give hope where there is no hope. Yea, they ask him to do the impossible.

They always manage to have some one tell him of the great virtues of the dead—of his kindness in the home, etc., etc., no matter what his life was like; now, since he is dead, we must remember only the good deeds and give him a passport to the heavenly home. And, when all done, they never appreciate the minister's service. If all were as they, then the Church of Christ could not exist and they and their dead would be buried as they lived —without Christian obsequies.

But we are writing to those who are members of the church and they are usually—though not always—thoughtful. The arrangements are now being made for the funeral, and let them be made in "decency and order" with reason and common sense prevailing. Prepare to

lay your dead to rest respectably but not extravagantly, nor beyond your means. I know of a certain family where the mother passed away, and they said: "It is the last we can do for her, we will give her a grand burial." They ordered a very expensive casket and buried her in the grandest, yea most extravagant style, but the undertaker is not paid to this day, and that is only half the story.

Remember, friends, it is always more honorable to have an inexpensive—a simple, modest—funeral and feel that all bills are paid, than to have an elaborate —showy—affair with the bills never paid. You show more respect for the dead by honesty than by pomp. You will feel more respectable when you meet the undertaker, and you will be more at peace with your own conscience when *you* come to need burial.

Again, I would say: Be prompt on the

day and hour appointed for the last sacred rites. Set your time for the services at the house and begin when that hour arrives. All the friends can be there in time if they only think so. There is a wide margin for improvement along this line. Sometimes one man, and usually one who lives nearest, keeps the whole assemblage waiting (and their position is always a very tiresome one) because he would like to attend to something more before the funeral, and he knows they will wait for him because he is *one of the friends.*

I knew of a man who, at the funeral of his brother, kept them waiting for more than one hour and a half while he was pottering about his premises.

If a man's time and mind are so much taken up with worldly cares, it matters not much whether or no he will be present at his brother's funeral. He is too much for self and too full of world.

Should you pay the minister for his services during the funeral of a member of the family? We feel loath in expressing our opinion on that question, but we say: That in some sections of the church no one would think of asking a minister's service for a funeral without expecting to give him something for it, no more than he would ask him to perform a marriage ceremony gratis. They look upon it as involving extra effort and time on the part of the minister who, of all professional men, is the most underpaid, considering the time and effort and expense involved in preparing himself for his calling, and thus these people are educated to give something for his services, in that way showing their appreciation.

In other sections many of them are inclined to think that it is his duty to bury the dead, and this seems to be the prevailing opinion among *outsiders.*

Others, again, think that the "*outsiders*," who never contribute a single farthing toward the support of the Gospel, should give something for the minister's service, which requires extra time and effort.

We reserve our opinion. Let each one ask: Is it just? Is it right? Is it Christian? and then do as you think best, or "as you would be done by."

"Farewell, conflicting hopes and fears,
Where lights and shades alternate dwell;
How bright th' unchanging morn appears
Farewell, inconstant world, farewell!"

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